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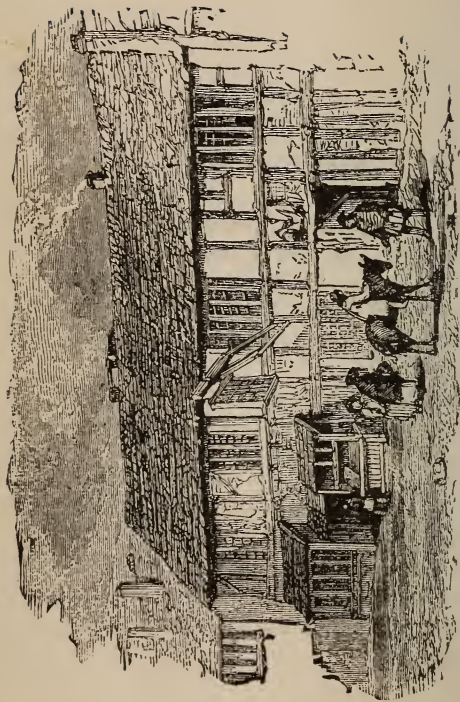
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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE text here presented, adapted for use in mixed classes, has been carefully collated with that of six or seven of the latest and best editions. Where there was any disagreement those readings have been adopted which seemed most reasonable and were supported by the best authority.

Professor Meiklejohn's exhaustive notes form the substance of those here used ; and his plan, as set forth in the "General Notice" annexed, has been carried out in these volumes. But as these plays are intended rather for pupils in school and college than for ripe Shakespearian scholars, we have not hesitated to prune his notes of whatever was thought to be too learned for our purpose, or on other grounds was deemed irrelevant to it. The notes of other English editors have been freely incorporated.



THE HOUSE IN WHICH SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN.

From a Drawing by J. W. Archer.

GENERAL NOTICE

“AN attempt has been made in these new editions to interpret Shakespeare by the aid of Shakespeare himself. The Method of Comparison has been constantly employed ; and the language used by him in one place has been compared with the language used in other places in similar circumstances, as well as with older English and with newer English. The text has been as carefully and as thoroughly annotated as the text of any Greek or Latin classic.

“The first purpose in this elaborate annotation is, of course, the full working out of Shakespeare’s meaning. The Editor has in all circumstances taken as much pains with this as if he had been making out the difficult and obscure terms of a will in which he himself was personally interested ; and he submits that this thorough excavation of the meaning of a really profound thinker is one of the very best kinds of training that a boy or girl can receive at school. This is to read the very mind of Shakespeare, and to weave his thoughts into the fibre of one’s own mental constitution. And always new rewards come to the careful reader—in the shape of new meanings, recognition of thoughts he had before missed,

of relations between the characters that had hitherto escaped him. For reading Shakespeare is just like examining Nature ; there are no hollownesses, there is no scamped work, for Shakespeare is as patiently exact and as first-hand as Nature herself.

“ Besides this thorough working-out of Shakespeare’s meaning, advantage has been taken of the opportunity to teach his English — to make each play an introduction to the ENGLISH OF SHAKESPEARE. For this purpose copious collections of similar phrases have been gathered from other plays ; his idioms have been dwelt upon ; his peculiar use of words ; his style and his rhythm. Some teachers may consider that too many instances are given ; but, in teaching, as in everything else, the old French saying is true : *Assez n’y a, s’il trop n’y a*. The teacher need not require each pupil to give him *all* the instances collected. If each gives one or two, it will probably be enough ; and, among them all, it is certain that one or two will stick in the memory. It is probable that, for those pupils who do not study either Greek or Latin, this close examination of every word and phrase in the text of Shakespeare will be the best substitute that can be found for the study of the ancient classics.

“ It were much to be hoped that Shakespeare should become more and more of a study, and that every boy and girl should have a thorough knowledge of at least one play of Shakespeare before leaving school. It would be one of the best lessons in human life, without the chance of a polluting or degrading experience. It would

also have the effect of bringing back into the too pale and formal English of modern times a large number of pithy and vigorous phrases which would help to develop as well as to reflect vigor in the characters of the readers. Shakespeare used the English language with more power than any other writer that ever lived—he made it do more and say more than it had ever done ; he made it speak in a more original way ; and his combinations of words are perpetual provocations and invitations to originality and to newness of insight.” —J. M. D. MEIKLEJOHN, M.A., *Professor of the Theory, History, and Practice of Education in the University of St. Andrews.*

SHAKESPEARE'S GRAMMAR

SHAKESPEARE lived at a time when the grammar and vocabulary of the English language were in a state of transition. Various points were not yet settled; and so Shakespeare's grammar is not only somewhat different from our own but is by no means uniform in itself. In the Elizabethan age, "Almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech. An adverb can be used as a verb, 'They *askance* their eyes'; as a noun, 'the *backward* and abysm of time'; or as an adjective, 'a *seldom* pleasure.' Any noun, adjective, or intransitive verb can be used as a transitive verb. You can 'happy' your friend, 'malice' or 'foot' your enemy, or 'fall' an axe on his neck. An adjective can be used as an adverb; and you can speak and act 'easy,' 'free,' 'excellent'; or as a noun, and you can talk of 'fair' instead of 'beauty,' and 'a pale' instead of 'a paleness.' Even the pronouns are not exempt from these metamorphoses. A 'he' is used for a man, and a lady is described by a gentleman as 'the fairest *she* he has yet beheld.' In the second place, every variety of apparent grammatical inaccuracy meets us. *He* for *him*, *him* for *he*; *spoke* and *took* for *spoken* and *taken*; plural nominatives with singu-

lar verbs ; relatives omitted where they are now considered necessary ; unnecessary antecedents inserted ; *shall* for *will*, *should* for *would*, *would* for *wish* ; *to* omitted after *I ought*, inserted after *I durst* ; double negatives ; double comparatives (‘more better,’ etc.) and superlatives ; *such* followed by *which*, *that* by *as*, *as* used for *as if* ; *that* for *so that* ; and lastly some verbs apparently with two nominatives, and others without any nominative at all.” — DR. ABBOTT’S *Shakesperian Grammar*.

SHAKESPEARE’S VERSIFICATION

Shakespeare’s plays are written mainly in what is known as *blank verse* ; but they contain a number of riming, and a considerable number of prose, lines. As a rule, rime is much commoner in the earlier than in the later plays. Thus, *Love’s Labor’s Lost* contains nearly 1100 riming lines, while (if we except the songs) *Winter’s Tale* has none. *The Merchant of Venice* has 124.

In speaking, we lay a stress on particular syllables ; this stress is called *accent*. When the words of a composition are so arranged that the accent recurs at regular intervals, the composition is said to be *rhythmical*. In blank verse the lines consist usually of ten syllables, of which the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth are accented. The line consists, therefore, of five parts, each of which contains an unaccented, followed by an accented syllable, as in the word “attend.” Each of these

five parts forms what is called a *foot* or *measure*; and the five together form a *pentameter*. "Pentameter" is a Greek word signifying "five measures." This is the usual form of a line of blank verse. But a long poem composed entirely of such lines would be monotonous, and for the sake of variety several important modifications have been introduced.

(a) After the tenth syllable, one or two unaccented syllables are sometimes added; as—

"*Me-thought | you said | you nei | ther lend | nor bor | row.*"

(b) In any foot the accent may be shifted from the second to the first syllable, provided two accented syllables do not come together.

"*Pluck' the | young suck' | ing cubs' | from the' | she bear'.*"

(c) In such words as "yesterday," "voluntary," "honesty," the syllables *-day*, *-ta-*, and *-ty* falling in the place of the accent, are, for the purposes of the verse, regarded as truly accented.

"*Bars' me | the right' | of vol'- | un-ta' | ry choos' | ing.*"

(d) Sometimes we have a succession of accented syllables; this occurs with monosyllabic feet only.

"*Why, now, blow wind, swell billow, and swim bark.*"

(e) Sometimes, but more rarely, two or even three unaccented syllables occupy the place of one; as—

"*He says | he does, | be-ing then | most flat | ter-ed.*"

(*f*) Lines may have any number of feet from one to six.

Finally, Shakespeare adds much to the pleasing variety of his blank verse by placing the pauses in different parts of the line (especially after the second or third foot), instead of placing them all at the ends of lines, as was the earlier custom.

N.B. — In some cases the rhythm requires that what we usually pronounce as one syllable shall be divided into two, as *fi-er* (fire), *su-er* (sure), *mi-el* (mile), etc. ; *too-elve* (twelve), *jaw-ee* (joy), etc. Similarly, *she-on* (-tion or -sion).

It is very important to give the pupil plenty of ear-training by means of formal scansion. This will greatly assist him in his reading.

PLAN OF STUDY FOR "PERFECT POSSESSION"

To attain to the standard of "Perfect Possession," the reader ought to have an intimate and ready knowledge of the subject.

The student ought, first of all, to read the play as a pleasure ; then to read it over again, with his mind upon the characters and the plot ; and lastly, to read it for the meanings, grammar, etc.

With the help of the scheme, he can easily draw up for himself short examination papers (1) on each scene, (2) on each act, (3) on the whole play.

1. The Plot and Story of the Play.

- (a) The general plot ;
- (b) The special incidents.

2. The Characters : Ability to give a connected account of all that is done, and most of what is said by each character in the play.

3. The Influence and Interplay of the Characters upon each other.

- (a) Relation of A to B and of B to A ;
- (b) Relation of A to C and D.

4. Complete Possession of the Language.

- (a) Meanings of words ;
- (b) Use of old words, or of words in an old meaning ;
- (c) Grammar ;
- (d) Ability to quote lines to illustrate a grammatical point.

5. Power to Reproduce, or Quote.

- (a) What was said by A or B on a particular occasion ;
- (b) What was said by A in reply to B ;
- (c) What argument was used by C at a particular juncture ;
- (d) To quote a line in instance of an idiom or of a peculiar meaning.

6. Power to Locate.

- (a) To attribute a line or statement to a certain person on a certain occasion ;
- (b) To cap a line ;
- (c) To fill in the right word or epithet.

INTRODUCTION TO HAMLET

“William Shakespeare. — He was born, it is thought, April 23, 1564, the son of a comfortable burgess of Stratford-on-Avon. While he was still young, his father fell into poverty, and an interrupted education left the son an inferior scholar. He had ‘small Latin and less Greek.’ But by dint of genius and by living in a society in which all sorts of information were attainable, he became an accomplished man. The story told of his deer-stealing in Charlecote woods is without proof, but it is likely that his youth was wild and passionate. At nineteen, he married Ann Hathaway, seven years older than himself, and was probably unhappy with her. For this reason, or from poverty, or from the driving of the genius that led him to the stage, he left Stratford about 1586–1587, and went to London at the age of twenty-two, and, falling in with Marlowe, Greene, and the rest, became an actor and a playwright, and may have lived their unrestrained and riotous life for some years.

“His First Period. — It is probable that before leaving Stratford he had sketched, a part at least, of his *Venus and Adonis*. It is full of the country sights and sounds,

of the ways of birds and animals, such as he saw when wandering in Charlecote woods. Its rich and overladen poetry and its warm coloring made him, when it was published, 1591-1593, at once the favorite of men like Lord Southampton, and lifted him into fame. But before that date he had done work for the stage by touching up old plays, and writing new ones. We seem to trace his 'prentice hand' in many dramas of the time, but the first he is usually thought to have retouched is *Titus Andronicus*, and, some time after, the First Part of *Henry VI*.

"*Love's Labor's Lost*, the first of his original plays, in which he quizzed and excelled the Euphuists in wit, was followed by the rapid farce of the *Comedy of Errors*. Out of these frolics of intellect and action he passed into pure poetry in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and mingled into fantastic beauty the classic legend, the mediæval fairyland, and the clownish life of the English mechanic. Italian story then laid its charm upon him, and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* preceded the southern glow of passion in *Romeo and Juliet*, in which he first reached tragic power. They complete, with *Love's Labor's Won*, afterwards recast as *All's Well That Ends Well*, the love plays of his early period. We may, perhaps, add to them the second act of an older play, *Edward III*. We should certainly read along with them, as belonging to the same passionate time, his *Rape of Lucrece*, a poem finally printed in 1594, one year later than the *Venus and Adonis*.

"The same poetic succession we have traced in the

poets is now found in Shakespeare. The patriotic feeling of England, also represented in Marlowe and Peele, now seized on him, and he turned from love to begin his great series of historical plays with *Richard II.*, 1593–1594. *Richard III.* followed quickly. To introduce it and to complete the subject, he recast the Second and Third Parts of *Henry VI.* (written by some unknown authors), and ended his first period with *King John*; five plays in a little more than two years.

“**His Second Period, 1596–1602.**—In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare reached entire mastery over his art. A mingled woof of tragic and comic threads is brought to its highest point of color when Portia and Shylock meet in court. Pure comedy followed in his retouch of the old *Taming of the Shrew*, and all the wit of the world, mixed with noble history, met next in the three comedies of *Falstaff*, the First and Second Parts of *Henry IV.*, and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. The historical plays were then closed with *Henry V.*, a splendid dramatic song to the glory of England.

“The Globe theatre, in which he was one of the proprietors, was built in 1599. In the comedies he wrote for it, Shakespeare turned to write of love again, not to touch its deeper passion as before, but to play with it in all its lighter phases. The flashing dialogue of *Much Ado About Nothing* was followed by the far-off forest world of *As You Like It*, where ‘the time fleets carelessly,’ and Rosalind’s character is the play. Amid all its gracious lightness steals in a new element, and the

melancholy of Jaques is the first touch we have of the older Shakespeare who had 'gained his experience, and whose experience had made him sad.' And yet it was but a touch; *Twelfth Night* shows no trace of it, though the play that followed, *All's Well That Ends Well*, again strikes a sadder note. We find this sadness fully grown in the later sonnets, which are said to have been finished about 1602. They were published in 1609.

"Shakespeare's life changed now, and his mind changed with it. He had grown wealthy during this period, and famous, and was loved by society. He was the friend of the Earls of Southampton and Essex, and of William Herbert, Lord Pembroke. The queen patronized him; all the best literary society was his own. He had rescued his father from poverty, bought the best house in Stratford and much land, and was a man of wealth and comfort. Suddenly all his life seems to have grown dark. His best friends fell into ruin, Essex perished on the scaffold, Southampton went to the Tower, Pembroke was banished from the Court; he may himself, as some have thought, have been concerned in the rising of Essex. Added to this, we may conjecture, from the imaginative pageantry of the sonnets, that he had unwisely loved, and been betrayed in his love by a dear friend. Disgust of his profession as an actor, and public and private ill weighed heavily on him, and in darkness of spirit, though still clinging to the business of the theatre, he passed from comedy to write of the sterner side of the world, to tell the tragedy of mankind.

“**His Third Period, 1602–1608**, begins with the last days of Queen Elizabeth. It contains all the great tragedies, and opens with the fate of Hamlet, who felt, like the poet himself, that ‘the time was out of joint.’ *Hamlet*, the dreamer, may well represent Shakespeare, as he stood aside from the crash that overwhelmed his friends, and thought on the changing world. The tragi-comedy of *Measure for Measure* was next written, and is tragic in thought throughout. *Julius Cæsar*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida* (finished from an incomplete work of his youth), *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon* (only in part his own) were all written in these five years. The darker sins of men, the un pitying fate which slowly gathers round and falls on men, the avenging wrath of conscience, the cruelty and punishment of weakness, the treachery, lust, jealousy, ingratitude, madness of men, the follies of the great, and the fickleness of the mob, are all, with a thousand other varying moods and passions, painted, and felt as his own while he painted them, during this stern time.

“**His Fourth Period, 1608–1613.** — As Shakespeare wrote of these things, he passed out of them, and his last days are full of the gentle and loving calm of one who has known sin and sorrow and fate, but has risen above them into peaceful victory. Like his great contemporary, Bacon, he left the world and his own evil time behind him, and with the same quiet dignity sought the innocence and stillness of country life. The country breathes through all the dramas of this time. The

flowers Perdita gathers in *Winter's Tale*, and the frolic of the sheep-shearing he may have seen in the Stratford meadows; the song of Fidele in *Cymbeline* is written by one who already feared no more the frown of the great, nor slander nor censure rash, and was looking forward to the time when men should say of him —

“ ‘ Quiet consummation have;
And renownèd be thy grave! ’

“Shakespeare probably left London in 1609, and lived in the house he had bought at Stratford-on-Avon. He was reconciled, it is said, to his wife; and the plays he writes speak of domestic peace and forgiveness. The story of *Marina*, which he left unfinished, and which two later writers expanded into the play of *Pericles*, is the first of his closing series of dramas. The *Two Noble Kinsmen* of Fletcher, a great part of which is now, on doubtful grounds, I think, attributed to Shakespeare, and in which the poetsought the inspiration of Chaucer, would belong to this period. *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, and the *Tempest* bring his history up to 1612, and in the next year he closed his poetic life by writing, with Fletcher, *Henry VIII*. For three years he kept silence, and then, on the 23d of April, 1616, the day he reached the age of fifty-two, as is supposed, he died.

“**His Work.** — We can only guess with regard to Shakespeare's life; we can only guess with regard to his character. It has been tried to find out what he was from his sonnets and from his plays, but every attempt seems to

be a failure. We cannot lay our hand on anything and say for certain that it was spoken by Shakespeare out of his own character. The most personal thing in all his writings is one that has scarcely been noticed. It is the Epilogue to the *Tempest*; and if it be, as is most probable, the last thing he ever wrote, then its cry for forgiveness, its tale of inward sorrow, only to be relieved by prayer, give us some dim insight into how the silence of those three years was passed; while its declaration of his aim in writing, 'which was to please,' — the true definition of an artist's aim, — should make us very cautious in our efforts to define his character from his works. Shakespeare made men and women whose dramatic action on each other, and towards a catastrophe, was intended to please the public, not to reveal himself.

"No commentary on his writings, no guesses about his life or character, are worth much which do not rest on this canon as their foundation: What he did, thought, learned, and felt, he did, thought, learned, and felt as an artist. And he was never less the artist, through all the changes of the time. Fully influenced, as we see in *Hamlet* he was, by the graver and more philosophic cast of thought of the later time of Elizabeth; passing on into the reign of James I., when pedantry took the place of gayety, and sensual the place of imaginative love in the drama, and artificial art the place of that art which itself is nature; he preserves to the last the natural passion, the simple tenderness, the sweetness, grace, and fire of the youthful Elizabethan poetry. The

Winter's Tale is as lovely a love story as *Romeo and Juliet*, the *Tempest* is more instinct with imagination than the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and as great in fancy, and yet there are fully twenty years between them. The only change is in the increase of power, and in a closer and graver grasp of human nature. Around him the whole tone and manner of the drama altered for the worse as his life went on, but his work grew to the close in strength and beauty." — STOPFORD BROOKE.

HISTORY OF THE PLAY

"1. The first known edition of *Hamlet* appeared in 1603. It bore the following title-page:—

THE
Tragicall Historie of HAMLET
Prince of Denmarke
By William Shake-speare.

As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere
At London printed for N. L. and John Trundell. 1603.

"The second quarto appeared in the following year, with a title-page much altered:—

THE
Tragicall Historie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke
By William Shakespeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L., and are to be sold at his shoppe vnder St. Dunston's Church in Fleetstreet 1604.

“It was upon this second quarto that all future editions of the play were based. It is conjectured that Shakespeare worked upon the basis of an old play, an edition of which is known to have appeared in 1602; that the quarto of 1603 represents his remodelling of this old play; and that the edition of 1604 was a complete and final recast.

“2. The story seems to have been drawn from the *Historia Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus, a native of Elsinore, who wrote about the end of the twelfth century; though the earliest existing edition of his history has the date of 1514. A French writer, Francis de Belleforest, embodied the story of *Amleth*, *Hamlet*, or *Hamblet* in his *Histoires Tragiques*; and an unknown English writer translated this story and published it separately under the title of *The Hystorie of Hamblet* — a black-letter quarto copy of which, bearing the date of 1608, exists in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

“3. The play of *Hamlet* is the longest of Shakespeare's plays; and it is one of the greatest. It is also the most varied in incident; and the argument of the play would make a very long story. Though full of incident, the main interest of the play is centered in thought and character — in the moods of mind through which Hamlet passes, until he meets death in the fulfillment of the purpose towards which he has not marched or hastened, but simply drifted. There has also been more written about *Hamlet* than about any

other play in the world. The books, pamphlets, and papers that have appeared on this play would constitute a respectable library. The play belongs to what has been called Shakespeare's period of 'Middle Tragedy'; and its companion in this category is *Julius Cæsar*. Both are tragedies of thought; and both were written when Shakespeare was about thirty-seven or thirty-eight.

"4. The young reader may with advantage study fully and carefully the character of Hamlet, as it stands out from and over against the circumstances which surround him, and as it may be interpreted — by the aid of contrast — by the characters of the other personages of the play. He is a student at the University of Wittenberg; he hears of the sudden and mysterious death of his father; he hastens home to find his mother married to his uncle — an event which shocks his soul and begins to poison his feelings towards his mother; he hears of the appearance of his father's ghost; he has an interview with it and a stern task laid upon him; the whole of the habits of his previous life are broken up; he is tortured by grief, doubt, love, and difficulty; and only in dying does he attain to clearness of mind and strength of soul. After having studied the relation of Hamlet to the circumstances and characters that surround him, the reader may take the other personages of the play and study them in pairs. Thus Horatio may be compared with Laertes; and both again with Hamlet. Horatio

says little, and is little affected by external events. Laertes is a worldly man — the son of his father; and with no inner life at all. He is as thoughtless as Hamlet is thoughtful — as rash and eager for action as Hamlet is filled to excess with considerations, reflections, and balancings of judgment. Claudius, again, stands in direct contrast with the late King (see III. iv. 56–66). Polonius, full of wise maxims which he has lost the power of applying to present exigencies, may be contrasted with Horatio, who says nothing, but is always ready to help, whatever may happen. Osric, in the end of the play, is an admirable set-off to the quiet soldierliness of Marcellus and Bernardo, in the beginning. Ophelia, with her deep, unspeaking nature — one of those persons ‘who live only in their own hearts, and upon their own hearts’ — forms a noble contrast to the shallow external nature of the Queen, whose conscience and heart do not begin to speak until they are appealed to in the directest and strongest way by Hamlet himself and by tragical events.” — MEIKLEJOHN.

CRITICAL OPINIONS

“The universality of Shakespeare’s genius is in some sort reflected in Hamlet. He has a mind wise and witty, abstract and practical; the utmost reach of philosophical contemplation is mingled with the most penetrating sagacity in the affairs of life; playful jest,

biting satire, sparkling repartee, with the darkest and deepest thoughts that can agitate man. He exercises all his various faculties with surprising readiness. He passes without an effort 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe,'—from his everyday character to personated lunacy. He divines, with the rapidity of lightning, the nature and motives of those who are brought into contact with him; fits in a moment his bearing and retorts to their individual peculiarities; is equally at home whether he is mocking Polonius with hidden raillery, or dissipating Ophelia's dream of love, or crushing the sponges with sarcasm and invective, or talking euphuism with Osric, and satirizing while he talks it; whether he is uttering wise maxims, or welcoming the players with facetious graciousness,—probing the inmost souls of others, or sounding the mysteries of his own. His philosophy stands out conspicuous among the brilliant faculties which contend for the mastery. It is the quality which gives weight and dignity to the rest. It intermingles with all his actions. He traces the most trifling incidents up to their general laws. His natural disposition is to lose himself in contemplation. He goes thinking out of the world. The commonest ideas that pass through his mind are invested with a wonderful freshness and originality. His meditations in the churchyard are on the trite notion that all ambition leads but to the grave. But what condensation, what variety, what picturesqueness, what intense, unmitigated gloom!

It is the finest sermon that was ever preached against the vanities of life.

“So far, we imagine, all are agreed. But the motives which induce Hamlet to defer his revenge are still, and perhaps will ever remain, debatable ground. The favorite doctrine of late is that the thinking part of Hamlet predominated over the active, — that he was as weak and vacillating in performance as he was great in speculation. If this theory were borne out by his general conduct, it would no doubt amply account for his procrastination; but there is nothing to countenance, and much to refute, the idea. Shakespeare has endowed him with a vast energy of will. There could be no sterner resolve than to abandon every purpose of existence, that he might devote himself, unfettered, to his revenge; nor was ever resolution better observed. He breaks through his passion for Ophelia, and keeps it down, under the most trying circumstances, with such inflexible firmness, that an eloquent critic has seriously questioned whether his attachment was real. The determination of his character appears again at the death of Polonius. An indecisive mind would have been shocked, if not terrified, at the deed. Hamlet dismisses him with a few contemptuous words, as a man would brush away a fly. He talks with even greater indifference of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whom he sends ‘to sudden death, not shriving-time allowed.’ He has on these, and, indeed, on all occasions, a short and absolute way which only belongs to

resolute souls. The features developed in his very hesitation to kill the King are inconsistent with the notion that his hand refuses to perform what his head contrives. He is always trying to persuade himself into a conviction that it is his duty, instead of seeking for evasions. — *Quarterly Review*, Vol. LXXIX., 1847.

“When *Hamlet* was written, Shakspeare had passed through his years of apprenticeship, and become a master-dramatist. In point of style the play stands midway between his early and his latest works. The studious superintendence of the poet over the development of his thought and imaginings, very apparent in Shakspeare’s early writings, now conceals itself; but the action of imagination and thought has not yet become embarrassing in its swiftness and multiplicity of direction. Rapid dialogue in verse, admirable for its combination of verisimilitude with artistic metrical effects, occurs in the scene in which Hamlet questions his friends respecting the appearance of the Ghost; the soliloquies of Hamlet are excellent examples of the slow, dwelling verse which Shakspeare appropriates to the utterance of thought in solitude; and nowhere did Shakspeare write a nobler piece of prose than the speech in which Hamlet describes to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern his melancholy. But such particulars as these do not constitute the chief evidence which proves that the poet had now attained maturity. The mystery, the baffling, vital obscurity of the play, and in particular of the character of its

chief person, make it evident that Shakspeare had left far behind him that early stage of development when an artist obtrudes his intentions, or, distrusting his own ability to keep sight of one uniform design, deliberately and with effort holds that design persistently before him. When Shakspeare completed *Hamlet*, he must have trusted himself and trusted his audience; he trusts himself to enter into relation with his subject, highly complex as that subject was, in a pure, emotional manner. *Hamlet* might so easily have been manufactured into an enigma, or a puzzle; and then the puzzle, if sufficient pains were bestowed, could be completely taken to pieces and explained. But Shakspeare created it a mystery, and therefore it is for ever suggestive; for ever suggestive, and never wholly explicable.

“It must not be supposed, then, that any *idea*, any magic phrase, will solve the difficulties presented by the play, or suddenly illuminate everything in it which is obscure. The obscurity itself is a vital part of the work of art, which deals not with a problem, but with a life; and in that life, the history of a soul which moved through shadowy border-lands between the night and day, there is much (as in many a life that is real) to elude and baffle inquiry. . . . The vital heart of the tragedy of *Hamlet* cannot be an idea; neither can it be a fragment of political philosophy. Out of Shakspeare’s profound sympathy with an individual soul and a personal life the wonderful creation came into being. . . .

“Hamlet is not merely or chiefly intellectual; the emotional side of his character is quite as important as the intellectual; his malady is as deep-seated in his sensibilities and in his heart as it is in the brain. If all his feelings translate themselves into thoughts, it is no less true that all his thoughts are impregnated with feeling. To represent Hamlet as a man of preponderating power of reflection, and to disregard his craving, sensitive heart, is to make the whole play incoherent and unintelligible. It is Hamlet’s intellect, however, together with his deep and abiding sense of the moral qualities of things, which distinguishes him, upon the glance of a moment, from the hero of Shakspeare’s first tragedy, Romeo. . . .

“Hamlet does not assume madness to conceal any plan of revenge. He possesses no such plan. And as far as his active powers are concerned, the assumed madness is a misfortune. Instead of assisting him to achieve anything, it is one of the causes which tend to retard his action. For now, instead of forcing himself upon the world, and compelling it to accept a mandate of his will, he can enjoy the delight of a mere observer and critic; an observer and critic both of himself and of others. He can understand and mock, whereas he ought to set himself sternly to his piece of work. He utters himself henceforth at large, because he is unintelligible. He does not aim at producing any effect with his speech, except in the instance of his appeal to Gertrude’s conscience. His words are

not deeds. They are uttered self-indulgently to please the intellectual or artistic part of him, or to gratify his passing mood of melancholy, of irritation, or of scorn. He bewilders Polonius with mockery, which effects nothing, but which bitterly delights Hamlet by its subtlety and cleverness. He speaks with singular openness to his courtier-friends, because they, filled with thoughts of worldly advancement and ambition, read all his meanings upside down, and the heart of his mystery is absolutely inaccessible to their shallow wits. When he describes to them his melancholy, he is in truth speaking in solitude to himself. Nothing is easier than to throw them off the scent. 'A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.' The exquisite cleverness of his mimetics and his mockery is some compensation to Hamlet for his inaction; this intellectual versatility, this agility, flatters his consciousness; and it is only on occasions that he is compelled to observe into what a swoon or syncope his will has fallen.

"Yet it has been truly said that only one who feels Hamlet's strength should venture to speak of Hamlet's weakness. That, in spite of difficulties without and inward difficulties, he still clings to this terrible duty, — letting it go, indeed, for a time, but returning to it again, and in the end accomplishing it, — implies strength. He is not incapable of vigorous action, — if only he be allowed no chance of thinking the fact away into an idea. . . . But all his action is sudden

we are by abundant evidence, that Shakspeare transformed with energetic will his knowledge into fact, we may be confident that when *Hamlet* was written, Shakspeare had gained a further stage in his culture of self-control, and that he had become not only adult as an author, but had entered upon the full maturity of his manhood."

—DOWDEN, *Shakspeare: His Mind and Art*.

"In *Hamlet*, though there is no Denmark of the ninth century, Shakespeare has suggested the prevailing rudeness of manners quite enough for his purpose. We see it in the single combat of Hamlet's father with the elder Fortinbras, in the vulgar wassail of the king, in the English monarch being expected to hang Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern out of hand merely to oblige his cousin of Denmark, in *Laertes*, sent to Paris to be made a gentleman of, becoming instantly capable of any the most barbarous treachery to glut his vengeance. We cannot fancy Ragnar Lodbrog or Eric the Red matriculating at Wittenberg, but it was essential that Hamlet should be a scholar, and Shakespeare sends him thither without more ado. All through the play we get the notion of a state of society in which a savage nature has disguised itself in the externals of civilization, like a Maori deacon, who has only to strip and he becomes once more a tattooed pagan with his mouth watering for a spare-rib of his pastor. Historically, at the date of *Hamlet*, the Danes were in the habit of burning their enemies alive in

their houses, with as much of their family about them as might be to make it comfortable. Shakespeare seems purposely to have dissociated his play from history by changing nearly every name in the original legend. The motive of the play — revenge as a religious duty — belongs only to a social state in which the traditions of barbarism are still operative, but, with infallible artistic judgment, Shakespeare has chosen, not untamed Nature, as he found it in history, but the period of transition, a period in which the times are always out of joint, and thus the irresolution which has its roots in Hamlet's own character is stimulated by the very incompatibility of that legacy of vengeance he has inherited from the past with the new culture and refinement of which he is the representative. . . .

“It is an inherent peculiarity of a mind like Hamlet's that it should be conscious of its own defect. Men of his type are forever analyzing their own emotions and motives. They cannot do anything, because they always see two ways of doing it. They cannot determine on any course of action, because they are always, as it were, standing at the cross-roads, and see too well the disadvantage of every one of them. It is not that they are incapable of resolve, but somehow the band between the motive power and the operative faculties is relaxed and loose. The engine works, but the machinery it should drive stands still. The imagination is so much in overplus, that thinking a thing be-

comes better than doing it, and thought with its easy perfection, capable of everything because it can accomplish everything with ideal means, is vastly more attractive and satisfactory than deed, which must be wrought at best with imperfect instruments, and always fall short of the conception that went before it. 'If to do,' says Portia, in the *Merchant of Venice*, — 'If to do were as easy as to know what 'twere good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.' Hamlet knows only too well what 'twere good to do, but he palters with everything in a double sense: he sees the grain of good there is in evil, and the grain of evil there is in good, as they exist in the world, and, finding that he can make those feather-weighted accidents balance each other, infers that there is little to choose between the essences themselves. He is of Montaigne's mind, and says expressly that 'there is nothing good or ill, but thinking makes it so.' He dwells so exclusively in the world of ideas that the world of facts seems trifling, nothing is worth the while; and he has been so long objectless and purposeless, so far as actual life is concerned, that, when at last an object and a name are forced upon him, he cannot deal with them, and gropes about vainly for a motive outside of himself that shall marshal his thoughts for him and guide his faculties into the path of action. He is the victim not so much of feebleness of will as of an intellectual indifference that hinders the will from working long in

any one direction. He wishes to will, but never wills. His continual iteration of resolve shows that he has no resolution. He is capable of passionate energy where the occasion presents itself suddenly from without, because nothing is so irritable as conscious irresolution with a duty to perform. But of deliberate energy he is not capable; for there the impulse must come from within, and the blade of his analysis is so subtile that it can divide the finest hair of motive twixt north and northwest side, leaving him desperate to choose between them. The very consciousness of his defect is an insuperable bar to his repairing it; for the unity of purpose, which enthuses every fibre of the character with will available whenever wanted, is impossible where the mind can never rest till it has resolved that unity into its component elements, and satisfied itself which on the whole is of greater value. A critical instinct, so insatiable that it must turn upon itself, for lack of something else to hew and hack, becomes incapable at last of originating anything except indecision. It becomes infallible in what *not* to do. How easily he might have accomplished his task is shown by the conduct of Laertes. When *he* has a death to revenge, he raises a mob, breaks into the palace, bullies the king, and proves how weak the usurper really was. . . .

“Hamlet is always studying himself. This world and the other, too, are always present to his mind, and there in the corner is the little black kobold of a doubt

making mouths at him. He breaks down the bridges before him, not behind him, as a man of action would do; but there is something more than this. He is an ingrain sceptic; though his is the scepticism, not of reason, but of feeling, whose root is want of faith in himself. In him it is passive, a malady rather than a function of the mind. We might call him insincere; not that he was in any sense a hypocrite, but only that he never was and never could be in earnest. Never could be, because no man without intense faith in something ever can. Even if he only believed in himself, that were better than nothing; for it will carry a man a great way in the outward successes of life, nay, will even sometimes give him the Archimedean fulcrum for moving the world. But Hamlet doubts everything. He doubts the immortality of the soul, just after seeing his father's spirit, and hearing from its mouth the secrets of the other world. He doubts Horatio even, and swears him to secrecy on the cross of his sword, though probably he himself has no assured belief in the sacredness of the symbol. He doubts Ophelia, and asks her, 'are you honest?' He doubts the ghost, after he has had a little time to think about it, and so gets up the play to test the guilt of the king. And how coherent the whole character is! With what perfect tact and judgment Shakespeare, in the advice to the players, makes him an exquisite critic! For just here that part of his character which would be weak in dealing with affairs

is strong. A wise scepticism is the first attribute of a good critic. . . .

“Another striking quality in Hamlet’s nature is his perpetual inclination to irony. I think this has been generally passed over too lightly, as if it were something external and accidental, rather assumed as a mask than part of the real nature of the man. It seems to me to go deeper, to be something innate, and not merely factitious. . . . It is not like the irony of Timon, which is but the wilful refraction of a clear mind twisting awry whatever enters it, — or of Iago, which is the slime that a nature essentially evil loves to trail over all beauty and goodness to taint them with distrust: it is the half jest, half earnest of an inactive temperament that has not quite made up its mind whether life is a reality or no, whether men were not made in jest, and which amuses itself equally with finding a deep meaning in trivial things and a trifling one in the profoundest mysteries of being, because the want of earnestness in its own essence infects everything else with its own indifference. If there be now and then an unmannerly rudeness and bitterness in it, as in the scenes with Polonius and Osric, we must remember that Hamlet was just in the condition which spurs men to sallies of this kind; dissatisfied, at one neither with the world nor with themselves, and accordingly casting about for something out of himself to vent his spleen upon. But even in these passages there is no hint of earnestness, of any pur-

pose beyond the moment; they are mere cat's-paws of vexation, and not the deep-raking ground-swell of passion, as we see it in the sarcasm of Lear.

"The question of Hamlet's madness has been much discussed and variously decided. High medical authority has pronounced, as usual, on both sides of the question. But the induction has been drawn from too narrow premises, being based on a mere diagnosis of the case, and not on an appreciation of the character in its completeness. We have a case of pretended madness in the Edgar of *King Lear*; and it is certainly true that that is a charcoal sketch, coarsely outlined, compared with the delicate drawing, the lights, shades, and half-tints of the portraiture in Hamlet. But does this tend to prove that the madness of the latter, because truer to the recorded observation of experts, is real, and meant to be real, as the other to be fictitious? Not in the least, as it appears to me. Hamlet, among all the characters of Shakespeare, is the most eminently a metaphysician and psychologist. He is a close observer, continually analyzing his own nature and that of others, letting fall his little drops of acid irony on all who come near him, to make them show what they are made of. Even Ophelia is not too sacred, Osric not too contemptible for experiment. If such a man assumed madness, he would play his part perfectly. If Shakespeare himself, without going mad, could so observe and remember all the abnormal symptoms as to be able to

reproduce them in Hamlet, why should it be beyond the power of Hamlet to reproduce them in himself? If you deprive Hamlet of reason, there is no truly tragic motive left. He would be a fit subject for Bedlam, but not for the stage. We might have pathology enough, but no pathos. Ajax first becomes tragic when he recovers his wits. If Hamlet is irresponsible, the whole play is a chaos. That he is not so might be proved by evidence enough, were it not labor thrown away.

“This feigned madness of Hamlet’s is one of the few points in which Shakespeare has kept close to the old story on which he founded his play; and as he never decided without deliberation, so he never acted without unerring judgment. Hamlet drifts through the whole tragedy. He never keeps on one tack long enough to get steerage-way, even if, in a nature like his, with those electric streamers of wind and fancy forever wavering across the vault of his brain, the needle of judgment would point in one direction long enough to strike a course by. The scheme of simulated insanity is precisely the one he would have been likely to hit upon, because it enabled him to follow his own bent, and to drift with an apparent purpose, postponing decisive action by the very means he adopts to arrive at its accomplishment, and satisfying himself with a show of doing something that he may escape so much the longer the dreaded necessity of really doing anything at all. It enables him to play

with life and duty, instead of taking them by the rougher side, where alone any firm grip is possible, — to feel that he is on the way toward accomplishing somewhat, when he is really paltering with his own irresolution. Nothing, I think, could be more finely imagined than this. Voltaire complains that he goes mad without any sufficient object or result. Perfectly true, and precisely what was most natural for him to do, and, accordingly, precisely what Shakespeare meant that he should do. It was delightful to him to indulge in imagination and humor, to prove his capacity for something by playing a part: the one thing he could not do was to bring himself to act, unless when surprised by a sudden impulse of suspicion, — as where he kills Polonius, and there he could not see his victim. He discourses admirably of suicide, but does not kill himself; he talks daggers, but uses none. He puts by the chance to kill the king with the excuse that he will not do it while he is praying, lest his soul be saved thereby, though it is more than doubtful whether he believed it himself. He allows himself to be packed off to England, without any motive except that it would for the time take him farther from a present duty: the more disagreeable to a nature like his because it was present, and not a mere matter for speculative consideration. When Goethe made his famous comparison of the acorn planted in a vase which it burst with its growth, and says that in like manner Hamlet is a nature which breaks down under

the weight of a duty too great for it to bear, he seems to have considered the character too much from one side. Had Hamlet actually killed himself to escape his true onerous commission, Goethe's conception of him would have been satisfactory enough. But Hamlet was hardly a sentimentalist, like Werther; on the contrary, he saw things only too clearly in the dry north-light of the intellect. It is chance that at last brings him to his end. It would appear rather that Shakespeare intended to show us an imaginative temperament brought face to face with actualities, into any clear relation of sympathy with which it cannot bring itself. The very means that Shakespeare makes use of to lay upon him the obligation of acting—the ghost—really seems to make it all the harder for him to act; for the specter but gives an additional excitement to his imagination and a fresh topic for his scepticism.” —LOWELL, *Shakespeare Once More*.

“Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What, then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is we who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself ‘too much i' the sun’; whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own

breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known 'the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes'; he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady; who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparition of strange things; who cannot be well at ease while he sees evil hovering near him like a specter; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought, — he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a play as his best resource to shove off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock representation of them: this is the true Hamlet.

"We have been so used to this tragedy that we hardly know how to criticise it any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. But we must make such observations as we can. It is the one of Shakespeare's plays that we think of oftenest, because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him we apply to ourselves, because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moralizer, and what makes him worth attending to is that he moralizes on his own feelings and experience. He is not

a commonplace pedant. If *Lear* shows the greatest depth of passion, *Hamlet* is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakespeare had more magnanimity than any other poet, and he has shown more of it in this play than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest: everything is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort; the incidents succeed each other as matters of course; the characters think and speak and act just as they might do if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene, — the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne upon the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark at the remote period of time fixed upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have been admitted as a bystander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and seen something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only 'the outward pageants and the signs of grief,' but 'we have that within that passes show.' We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature; but Shakespeare, together with his own comments,

gives us the original text that we may judge for ourselves. This is a very great advantage. . . .

“The moral perfection of this character has been called in question, we think, by those who did not understand it. It is more interesting than according to rules: amiable, though not faultless. The ethical delineations of ‘that noble and liberal casuist’ (as Shakespeare has been well called) do not exhibit the drab-colored Quakerism of morality. His plays are not copied either from *The Whole Duty of Man*, or from *The Academy of Compliments*! We confess we are a little shocked at the want of refinement of those who are shocked at the want of refinement in Hamlet. The want of punctilious exactness in his behavior either partakes of the ‘license of the time,’ or else belongs to the very excess of intellectual refinement in the character, which makes the common rules of life, as well as his own purposes, sit loose upon him. He may be said to be amenable only to the tribunal of his own thoughts, and is too much taken up with the airy world of contemplation to lay as much stress as he ought on the practical consequences of things. His habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time.

“Nothing can be more affecting or beautiful than the Queen’s apostrophe to Ophelia on throwing flowers into the grave. . . . Shakespeare was thoroughly a master of the mixed motives of human character, and he here shows us the Queen, who was so criminal in some

respects, not without sensibility and affection in other relations of life. Ophelia is a character almost too exquisitely touching to be dwelt upon. Oh, rose of May! oh, flower too soon faded! Her love, her madness, her death, are described with the truest touches of tenderness and pathos. It is a character which nobody but Shakespeare could have drawn in the way that he has done, and to the conception of which there is not even the smallest approach, except in some of the old romantic ballads. Her brother, Laertes, is a character we do not like so well: he is too hot and choleric, and somewhat rhodomontade."

— HAZLITT, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*.

"I set about investigating every trace of Hamlet's character, as it had shown itself before his father's death: I endeavored to distinguish what in it was independent of this mournful event; independent of the terrible events that followed; and what most probably the young man would have been, had no such thing occurred.

"Soft, and from a noble stem, this royal flower had sprung up under the immediate influences of majesty: the idea of moral rectitude with that of princely elevation, the feeling of the good and dignified with the consciousness of high birth, had in him been unfolded simultaneously. He was a prince, by birth a prince; and he wished to reign, only that good men might be good without obstruction. Pleasing in form, polished by nature, courteous from the heart, he was meant

to be the pattern of youth and the joy of the world.

“Without any prominent passion, his love for Ophelia was a still presentiment of sweet wants. His zeal in knightly accomplishments was not entirely his own; it needed to be quickened and inflamed by praise bestowed on others for excelling in them. Pure in sentiment, he knew the honorable-minded, and could prize the rest which an upright spirit tastes on the bosom of a friend. To a certain degree, he had learned to discern and value the good and the beautiful in arts and sciences; the mean, the vulgar was offensive to him; and if hatred could take root in his tender soul, it was only so far as to make him properly despise the false and changeful insects of a court, and play with them in easy scorn. He was calm in his temper, artless in his conduct; neither pleased with idleness, nor too violently eager for employment. The routine of a university he seemed to continue when at court. He possessed more mirth of humor than of heart; he was a good companion, pliant, courteous, discreet, and able to forget and forgive an injury; yet never able to unite himself with those who overstepped the limits of the right, the good, and the becoming. . . .

“Figure to yourselves this youth, this son of princes; conceive him vividly, bring his state before your eyes, and then observe him when he learns that his father’s spirit walks; stand by him in the terrors of the night, when the venerable ghost itself appears before him.

A horrid shudder passes over him; he speaks to the mysterious form; he sees it beckon him; he follows it, and hears. The fearful accusation of his uncle rings in his ears; the summons to revenge, and the piercing oft-repeated prayer, Remember me!

“And when the ghost had vanished, who is it that stands before us? A young hero panting for vengeance? A prince by birth, rejoicing to be called to punish the usurper of his crown? No! trouble and astonishment take hold of the solitary young man; he grows bitter against smiling villains, swears that he will not forget the spirit, and concludes with the significant ejaculation:—

‘The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!’

“In these words, I imagine, will be found the key to Hamlet’s whole procedure. To me it is clear that Shakspeare meant, in the present case, to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it. In this view the whole piece seems to me to be composed. There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom; the roots expand, the jar is shivered.

“A lovely, pure, noble and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him; the present is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of

him; not in themselves impossibilities, but such for him. He winds, and turns, and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind; at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts; yet still without recovering his peace of mind." — Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*. (*Translated by Carlyle*.)

"Understand that, as he says these words ('Well said, old mole!' &c., I. v. 162), his teeth chatter, and that he is 'pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other.' Intense anguish ends with a burst of laughter which is nothing else than a spasm. Thenceforth Hamlet speaks as though he had a continuous nervous attack. His madness is feigned, I admit; but his mind, as a door whose hinges are twisted, swings and bangs to every wind with a mad precipitance and with a discordant noise. He has no need to search for strange ideas, apparent incoherences, exaggerations, the deluge of sarcasm which he accumulates. He finds them within him; he does himself no violence, — he simply gives himself up to them. When he has the piece played which is to unmask his uncle, he raises himself, lounges on the floor, would lay his head in Ophelia's lap, he addresses the actors, and comments on the piece to the spectators; his nerves are strung, his excited thought is like a waving and crackling flame, and cannot find fuel enough in the multitude of objects around it, upon all of which it seizes. When the king rises, unmasked and troubled, Hamlet sings

and says, 'would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers — if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me — with two Provincial roses on my razed shoes get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?' It is clear that this state is a disease, and that the man will not survive it. . . . What Hamlet's imagination robs him of is the coolness and strength to go quietly, and, with premeditation, plunge a sword into a breast. He can only do the thing on a sudden suggestion; he must have a moment of enthusiasm; he must think the king is behind the arras, or else, seeing that he himself is poisoned, he must find his victim under his foil's point. He is not master of his acts; occasion dictates them; he cannot plan a murder, but must improvise it. A too lively imagination exhausts energy by the accumulation of images, and by the fury of intentness which absorbs it. You recognize in him a poet's soul, made not to act, but to dream, which is lost in contemplating the phantoms of its creation, which sees the imaginary world too clearly to play a part in the real world; an artist whom evil chance has made a prince, whom worse chance has made an avenger of crime, and who, destined by nature for genius, is condemned by fortune to madness and unhappiness. Hamlet is Shakespeare, and at the close of a gallery of portraits, which have all some features of his own, Shakespeare has painted himself in the most striking of them all." — Taine, *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*. (Translated by H. Van Laun.)

OPHELIA

“Of the character of Ophelia, and the situation she holds in the action of the play, I need say little. Everything about her is young, beautiful, artless, innocent, and touching. She comes before us in striking contrast to the queen, who, fallen as she is, feels the influence of her simple and happy virgin purity. Amid the frivolity, flattery, fawning, and artifice of a corrupted court, she moves in all the unpolluted loveliness of nature. She is like an artless, gladsome, and spotless shepherdess, with the gracefulness of society hanging like a transparent veil over her natural beauty. But we feel, from the first, that her lot is to be mournful. The world in which she lives is not worthy of her. And soon, as we connect her destiny with Hamlet, we know that darkness is to overshadow her, and that sadness and sorrow will step in between her and the ghost-haunted avenger of his father’s murder. Soon as our pity is excited for her, it continues gradually to deepen; and when she appears in her madness, we are not more prepared to weep over all its most pathetic movements than we afterwards are to hear of her death. Perhaps the description of that catastrophe by the Queen is poetical rather than dramatic; but its exquisite beauty prevails, and, Ophelia, dying and dead, is still the same Ophelia that first won our love. Perhaps the very forgetfulness of her, throughout the remainder of the play,

leaves the soul at full liberty to dream of the departed. She has passed away from the earth like a beautiful air, — a delightful dream. There would have been no place for her in the agitation and tempest of the final catastrophe.”

— T[HOMAS] C[AMPBELL], *Letters on Shakespeare*.

“Ophelia, — poor Ophelia! Oh far too soft, too good, too fair to be cast among the briers of this working-day world, and fall and bleed upon the thorns of life! What shall be said of her? for eloquence is mute before her! Like a strain of sad, sweet music which comes floating by us on the wings of night and silence, and which we rather feel than hear, — like the exhalation of the violet dying even upon the sense it charms, — like the snow-flake dissolved in air before it has caught a stain of earth, — like the light surf severed from the billow, which a breath disperses, — such is the character of Ophelia; so exquisitely delicate, it seems as if a touch would profane it; so sanctified in our thoughts by the last and worst of human woes, that we scarcely dare to consider it too deeply. The love of Ophelia, which she never once confesses, is like a secret which we have stolen from her, and which ought to die upon our hearts as upon her own. Her sorrows ask not words, but tears; and her madness has precisely the same effect that would be produced by the spectacle of real insanity, if brought before us; we feel inclined to turn away and veil our eyes in reverential pity and too painful sympathy. . . .

“It is the helplessness of Ophelia, arising merely from her innocence, and pictured without any indication of weakness, which melts us with such profound pity. She is so young that neither her mind nor her person have attained maturity; she is not aware of the nature of her own feelings; they are prematurely developed in their full force before she has strength to bear them; and love and grief together rend and shatter the frail texture of her existence, like the burning fluid poured into a crystal vase. She says very little, and what she does say seems rather intended to hide than to reveal the emotions of her heart; yet in those few words we are made as perfectly acquainted with her character, and with what is passing in her mind, as if she had thrown forth her soul with all the glowing eloquence of Juliet. Passion with Juliet seems innate, a part of her being, ‘as dwells the gathered lightning in a cloud’; and we never fancy her but with the dark splendid eyes and Titian-like complexion of the South. While in Ophelia we recognize as distinctly the pensive, fair-haired, blue-eyed daughter of the North, whose heart seems to vibrate to the passion she has inspired, more conscious of being loved than of loving; and yet, alas! loving in the silent depths of her young heart far more than she is loved. . . .

“Of her subsequent madness, what can be said? What an affecting, what an astonishing picture of a mind utterly, hopelessly wrecked! past hope, past cure! There is the frenzy of excited passion, — there is the

madness caused by intense and continued thought, — there is the delirium of fevered nerves; but Ophelia's madness is distinct from these: it is not the suspension, but the utter destruction, of the reasoning powers; it is the total imbecility which, as medical people well know, frequently follows some terrible shock to the spirits. Constance is frantic; Lear is mad; Ophelia is *insane*. Her sweet mind lies in fragments before us, — a pitiful spectacle! Her wild, rambling fancies; her aimless, broken speeches; her quick transitions from gayety to sadness, — each equally purposeless and causeless; her snatches of old ballads, such as perhaps her nurse sung her to sleep with in her infancy, — are all so true to the life, that we forget to wonder, and can only weep. It belonged to Shakespeare alone so to temper such a picture that we can endure to dwell upon it: —

‘Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favor and to prettiness.’ ”

— MRS. JAMESON, *Characteristics of Women*.

POLONIUS

“Polonius is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. His mode of oratory is truly represented as designed to ridicule the practice of those times, of prefaces that made no introduction, and of method

that embarrassed rather than explained. This part of his character is accidental; the rest is natural. Such a man is positive and confident, because he knows that his mind was once strong, and knows not that it is become weak. Such a man excels in general principles, but fails in the particular application. He is knowing in retrospect, and ignorant in foresight." — DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

"Polonius has no difficulty in calling to mind a number of wise precepts for the guidance of his son's conduct, the last of which is most striking for its force and nobleness. Yet it is undeniable that he is often both foolish and mean. The reason is that his memory has outlived his intellect; that prettinesses have taken the place of wisdom in his mind; that he recalls words of wisdom and noble sentiments rather than feels them; and that his acknowledged services have so persuaded him of his own merit that he will both act meanly and express himself absurdly, because he conceives, without any misgiving at all, that whatever he does or says is justified by his saying or doing it. Still, in estimating this character, we should do well to remember that the use of language like that of Polonius' would not, in Shakespeare's euphuistic days, argue the complete folly which it would at the present time." — MOBERLY.

HORATIO

"Horatio is the only complete man in the play,—solid, well-knit, and true ; a noble, quiet nature, with that highest of all qualities, judgment, always sane and prompt ; who never drags his anchors for any wind of opinion or fortune, but grips all the closer to the reality of things. He seems one of those calm, undemonstrative men whom we love and admire without asking to know why, crediting them a capacity of great things, without any test of actual achievement, because we feel that their manhood is a constant quality, and no mere accident of circumstances and opportunity. Such men are always sure of the presence of their highest self on demand. Hamlet is continually drawing bills on the future, secured by his promise of himself to himself, which he can never redeem. . . .

"We do not believe that Horatio ever thought he 'was not a pipe for Fortune's finger to play what stop she pleased,' till Hamlet told him so. That was Fortune's affair, not his ; let her try it, if she liked. He is unconscious of his own peculiar qualities, as men of decision commonly are, or they would not be men of decision. When there is a thing to be done, they go straight at it, and for the time there is nothing for them in the whole universe but themselves and their object." — LOWELL, *Shakespeare Once More*.

"The character of Horatio is the only spot of sunlight in the play ; and he is a cheering, though not a

joyous gleam coming across the dark hemisphere of treachery, mistrust, and unkindness. The cheerfulness of the grave-digger arises from an intimacy with, and a callous indifference to, his occupation, which, as Horatio says : —

‘ Custom hath made in him a property of easiness.’

It is the result, too, of a healthy old age ; or, in some sort, it is not a sentiment, but a physical consequence ; even a negation.

“ But in the deportment of Horatio we have the constant recognition of a placid and pensive man ; making no protestations, yet constantly prepared for gentle service. Modest, and abiding his time to be appreciated, his friendship for Hamlet is a purely disinterested principle, and the Prince bears high testimony to it, — an illustrious and eloquent tribute to the qualities of his head and heart. (Act III. Sc. 2.) . . .

“ And all this is no lip-deep attestation. Horatio has it, and has earned it. As he adhered to his friend through life, so would he have followed him in death ; and only consented to survive him that he might redeem his character with the world.”

— CHARLES COWDEN-CLARKE, *Shakespeare Characters*.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN

“ Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are favorable samples of the thorough-paced, time-serving court knave — servants of all-work, ticketed and to be hired

for any hard or dirty job. Shakespeare has at once, and unequivocally, signified his opinion of the race, by making Rosencrantz, the time-server, the school-fellow of Hamlet, and under the color of their early associations, professing a personal friendship—even an affection for him, at the very time that he had accepted the office of spy upon his actions, and traitor to his confidence. ‘Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do surely but bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.’ Immediately upon the heel of this protestation he accepts the King’s commission to convey his ‘friend’ to England, where measures had been taken for his assassination. Rosencrantz and his fellow would designate themselves as thoroughly ‘loyal men’; they make no compromise of their calling; the ‘broad R’ is burnt into them; they are for the king’s service exclusively; and with the scavenger’s calling they would scoop all into that reservoir. The poet has sketched them in few and bold outlines; their subtleties of character stare out like the bones of a starved beast. They are time-servers by profession, and upon hire; and ‘verily they have their reward.’”
— CHARLES COWDEN-CLARKE, *Shakespeare Characters*.

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

PERSONS REPRESENTED

CLAUDIUS, *King of Denmark*

HAMLET, *son to the late, and nephew to the present King*

POLONIUS, *Lord Chamberlain*

HORATIO, *friend to Hamlet*

LAERTES, *son to Polonius*

VOLTIMAND,

CORNELIUS,

ROSENCRANTZ,

GUILDENSTERN,

OSRIC,

A Gentleman

A Priest

MARCELLUS, } *Officers*

BERNARDO, }

FRANCISCO, *a Soldier*

REYNALDO, *servant to Polonius*

Players

Two Clowns, grave-diggers

FORTINBRAS, *Prince of Norway*

A Captain

English Ambassadors

GERTRUDE, *Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet*

OPHELIA, *daughter to Polonius.*

*Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and
other Attendants*

Ghost of Hamlet's father

SCENE — ELSINORE

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

ACT I

SCENE I

Elsinore. A Platform before the Castle

FRANCISCO *at his post.* Enter to him BERNARDO

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me : stand, and unfold yourself.

Ber. Long live the king!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed,
Francisco.

Fran. For this relief much thanks; 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Fran. I think I hear them. — Stand, ho! Who is there?

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier:

Who hath relieved you?

Fran. Bernardo hath my place.

Give you good night. *[Exit*

Mar. Holla! Bernardo!

Ber. Say, —

What, is Horatio there?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

Mar. What, has this thing appeared again to-night?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy;

And will not let belief take hold of him

Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:

Therefore I have entreated him along

With us to watch the minutes of this night,

That if again this apparition come,

He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile;

And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story, 30
What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yon same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one, —

Enter Ghost

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes
again!

Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio. 40

Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like; it harrows me with fear and
wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Question it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of
night,

Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee,
speak!

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See, it stalks away.

Hor. Stay, speak! speak! I charge thee, speak!

[*Exit Ghost*

50 *Mar.* 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? you tremble and look pale;
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king?

Hor. As thou art to thyself:
Such was the very armor he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
60 So frowned he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead
hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work I know
not;

But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that
knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land, 70
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-laborer with the day;
Who is't that can inform me?

Hor. That can I;

At least the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appeared to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway, 80
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet —
For so this side of our known world esteemed him —
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a sealed compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands

Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror :
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king ; which had returned

90 To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same covenant
And carriage of the article designed,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimprovèd mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Sharked up a list of lawless resolute,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't ; which is no other —
As it doth well appear unto our state —

100 But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsative, those 'foresaid lands
So by his father lost : and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,
The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so :

Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armèd through our watch : so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.

110 *Hor.* A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:
And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climature and countrymen.

120

Re-enter Ghost

But soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me. — Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me:
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me:
If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life

130

Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
[*Cock crows*

Speak of it: stay, and speak! — Stop it, Marcellus.

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber. 'Tis here!

Hor. 'Tis here!

140 *Mar.* 'Tis gone! [Exit Ghost]

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
150 Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes

Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike, 160
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it, 170
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE II

A Room of State in the Castle

Flourish. Enter the KING, QUEEN, HAMLET, POLO-
NIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords,
and Attendants

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's
death

The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom

To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,

10 Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, —
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barred
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along: — for all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
20 Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleaguèd with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not failed to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.

Now for ourself and for this time of meeting :
Thus much the business is ; we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress
His further gait herein ; in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject : and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.

30

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor., Vol. In that and all things will we show our 40
duty.

King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell. —

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?
You told us of some suit ; what is't, Laertes ?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice : what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking ?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,

Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.

What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

50 *Laer.* Dread my lord,

Your leave and favor to return to France ;

From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation,

Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,

My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says
Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow
leave

By laborsome petition, and at last

60 Upon his will I sealed my hard consent :

I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes ; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will !

But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, —

Ham. [*aside.*] A little more than kin, and less than
kind.

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on
you ?

Ham. Not so, my lord ; I am too much i' the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not for ever with thy vailèd lids 70

Seek for thy noble father in the dust :

Thou know'st 'tis common ; all that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee ?

Ham. *Seems*, madam ! nay, it is ; I know not
seems.

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye, 80

Nor the dejected havior of the visage,

Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,

That can denote me truly ; these indeed *seem*,

For they are actions that a man might play ;

But I have that within which passeth show ;

These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,
Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father ;

But, you must know, your father lost a father ;

That father lost, lost his ; and the survivor bound 90

In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow : but to perséver
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness ; 'tis unmanly grief :
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven ;
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschooled :
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
100 Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart ? Fie ! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
This must be so. We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father ; for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne,
110 And with no less nobility of love,
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire ;
And we beseech you, bend you to remain

Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam. 120

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark. — Madam, come;
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
And the king's rouse the heavens shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

[*Flourish.* *Exeunt all but HAMLET*

Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew! 130
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two;
— So excellent a king; that was, to this,

140 Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
 That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
 Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
 Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,
 As if increase of appetite had grown
 By what it fed on; and yet, within a month, —
 Let me not think on't, — Frailty, thy name is woman! —
 A little month! or ere those shoes were old
 With which she followed my poor father's body,
 Like Niobe, all tears; — why she, even she, —
 150 O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
 Would have mourned longer, ~~—~~ married with mine
 uncle,

My father's brother, but no more like my father
 Than I to Hercules; } within a month?
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes,
 She married: — O, most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
 It is not nor it cannot come to good;
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

160 *Ham.* I am glad to see you well:
 Horatio, — or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant
ever,

Ham. Sir, my good friend, I'll change that name
with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio? —
Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord, —

Ham. I am very glad to see you. — [*To BERNARDO.*]
Good even, sir. —

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so, 170
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked
meats 180

Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio! —

My father, — methinks I see my father.

Hor. O, where, my lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.)

190 *Hor.* My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw? who?

Hor. My lord, the king your father.

Ham. The king my father!

Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
200 Been thus encountered. A figure like your father,
Armed at all points, exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walked
By their oppressed and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had delivered, both in time, 210
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watched.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did;

But answer made it none: yet once methought,
It lifted up its head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud.
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away, 220
And vanished from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honored lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

Mar., Ber. We do, my lord.

Ham. Armed say you?

Mar., Ber. Armed, my lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

Mar., Ber. My lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

230 *Hor.* O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

Ham. What, looked he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fixed his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amazed you.

Ham. Very like, very like. — Stayed it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

Mar., Ber. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw't.

Ham. His beard was grizzled? no?

240 *Hor.* It was, as I have seen it in his life,

A sable silvered.

Ham. I will watch to-night;

Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape.
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto concealed this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves. So fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honor.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

[*Exeunt* HOR., MAR., and BER.]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit*]

SCENE III

A Room in POLONIUS's House

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA

Laer. My necessities are embarked; farewell:
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

10 *Laer.* Think it no more :

For nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk ; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now ;
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will ; but you must fear,
His greatness weighed, his will is not his own ;
For he himself is subject to his birth ;
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
20 Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of this whole state ;
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
As he in his particular act and place

May give his saying deed ; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain,
If with too credent ear you list his songs. 30

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep within the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon ;
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes ;
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent. 40

Be wary then ; best safety lies in fear ;
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And recks not his own rede.

Laer. O, fear me not.
I stay too long ; — but here my father comes. 50

Enter POLONIUS

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stayed for. There; my blessing with thee!

[Laying his hand on LAERTES' head]

And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou charácter. Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

60 The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear't that the opposèd may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
70 For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous, chief in that.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man. /
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord. 80

Pol. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well

What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory locked,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [Exit

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the lord
Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought:

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you: and you yourself 90
Have of your audience been most free and boun-
teous:

If it be so, — as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, — I must tell you
You do not understand yourself so clearly

As it behooves my daughter and your honor :
What is between you? give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. *Affection!* pooh! you speak like a green girl,
100 Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.

Do you believe his *tenders*, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus — you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. My lord, he hath impórtuned me with love
In honorable fashion.

110 *Pol.* Ay, *fashion* you may call it; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech,
my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time

Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate 120
Than a command to parley. For lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young;
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers, —
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
This is for all, —
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure, 130
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt*

SCENE IV

The Platform

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS

Ham. The air bites shrewdly. It is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near
the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

*[A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off,
within*

What does this mean, my lord?

Ham. The king doth wake to-night and takes his
rouse,

Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;

10 And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,

The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out

The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't:

But to my mind, though I am native here

And to the manner born, it is a custom

More honored in the breach than the observance.

This heavy-headed revel east and west

Makes us traduced and taxed of other nations:

They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase

20 Soil our addition; and, indeed, it takes

From our achievements, though performed at height,

The pith and marrow of our attribute.

So, oft it chances in particular men,

That for some vicious mole of nature in them,

As in their birth, — wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin —
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausible manners; — that these men, — 30
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star, —
Their virtues else — be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo —
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of e'il
Doth all the noble substance ever dout,
To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes.

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us! —
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, 40
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father; royal Dane, O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell

Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulcher,
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urned,
50 Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition,
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[Ghost beckons HAMLET

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

60 *Mar.* Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then will I follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?

[It waves me forth again ; I'll follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff 70
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness ? think of it ;
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still. —
Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands ! 80

Hor. Be ruled ; you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

[*Ghost beckons*
Still am I called ? — unhand me, gentlemen ;

[*Breaking from them*
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me :
I say, away ! — Go on ; I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET*

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after. — To what issue will this come?

90 *Mar.* Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE V

Another part of the Platform

Enter Ghost and HAMLET

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt
hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;

Doomed for a certain term to walk the night, 10
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combinèd locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine : 20
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list !
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,

Ham. O God!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham. Murder?

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as
swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love, 30
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost.

I find thee apt ;

And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed

That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,

Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear :

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,

A serpent stung me ; so the whole ear of Denmark

Is by a forgèd process of my death

Rankly abused ; but know thou noble youth,

The serpent that did sting thy father's life

40 Now wears his crown.

Ham.

O my prophetic soul !

My uncle ?

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,

— O wicked wit and gifts that have the power

So to seduce ! — won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen :

O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there !

From me, whose love was of that dignity

50 That it went hand in hand even with the vow

I made to her in marriage ; and to decline

Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor

To those of mine !

But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;

Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,

60 My custom always in the afternoon,

Upon my sècure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursèd hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment ; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body ;
And with a sudden vigor it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ; 70
And a most instant tetter barked about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched ;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhouseled, disappointed, unaneled ;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

Ham. Oh, horrible ! Oh, horrible ! most horrible ! 80

Ghost. If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.

But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught ; leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,

To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!

The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,

90 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire;

Adieu, adieu, adieu! remember me.

[*Exit*

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What
else?

And shall I couple hell?—Oh, fie! Hold, hold, my
heart;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,

But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe. Remember thee?

Yea, from the table of my memory

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,

100 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,

That youth and observation copied there;

And thy commandment all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain,

Unmixed with baser matter: yes, by heaven!

O most pernicious woman!

O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!

My tables, — meet it is I set it down,

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. —

[*Writing*

So, uncle, there you are. — Now to my word ; 110
It is *Adieu, adieu ! Remember me.*

I have sworn't.

Hor. [within] My lord, my lord !

Mar. [within] Lord Hamlet !

Hor. [within] Heaven secure him !

Ham. So be it !

Hor. [within] Illo, ho, ho, my lord !

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS

Mar. How is't, my noble lord ?

Hor. What news, my lord ?

Ham. O, wonderful !

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No ; you'll reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord. 120

Ham. How say you then ; would heart of man once
think it ?

But you'll be secret ?

Hor., Mar. Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Ham. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Den-
mark

But he's an arrant knave.

L. of C.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the
grave,
To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right; you are i' the right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands, and part;
You, as your business and desire shall point you, —
130 For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is, — and for mine own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my
lord.

Ham. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offense, my lord.

Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offense too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you;
For your desire to know what is between us,
140 O'ermaster it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord? We will.

Ham. Never make known what you have seen
to-night.

Hor., Mar. My lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith,

My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,
truepenny? —

150

Come on; you hear this fellow in the cellarage;

Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen.

Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*beneath*] Swear.

Ham. *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our ground. —

Come hither, gentlemen,

And lay your hands again upon my sword:

Never to speak of this that you have heard;

Swear by my sword.

160

Ghost. [*beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the ground
so fast?

A worthy pioneer! — Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

170 How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on,

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As *Well, well, we know*; or, *We could, an if we would*;

Or *If we list to speak*; or *There be, an if they might*;

Or such ambiguous giving out, to note

That you know aught of me: — this not to do,

180 So grace and mercy at your most need help you,

Swear.

Ghost. [*beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbèd spirit! [*They swear*]

So, gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you:

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

May do, to express his love and friending to you,

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint; — O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right! —
Nay, come, let's go together.

190

[*Exeunt*]

ACT II

SCENE I

A Room in Polonius's House

Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO

Pol. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo, Before you visit him, to make inquiry Of his behavior.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris ;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expense ; and finding
10 By this encompassment and drift of question
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it :
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him ;
As thus, *I know his father and his friends,*
And in part him. Do you mark this, Reynaldo ?
Rey. Ah, very well, my lord.

Pol. And in part him; but, you may say, not well:
But if't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so; and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank 20
As may dishonor him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Fighting; you may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonor him.

Pol. 'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency; 30
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so
quaintly

That they may seem the taints of liberty;
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind;
A savageness in unreclaimèd blood,
Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good lord, —

Pol. Wherefore should you do this?

Rey. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift;
And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,
40 As 'twere a thing a little soiled i' the working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured
He closes with you in this consequence;
Good sir, or so; or *friend* or *gentleman*, —
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this, — he does —
50 What was I about to say?

By the mass, I was about to say something: — where
did I leave?

Rey. At closes in the consequence, at friend or so, and
gentleman.

Pol. At closes in the consequence, — ay, marry;
He closes with you thus: — *I know the gentleman*;
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, or then; with such or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming, there o'ertook in his rouse,
There falling out at tennis; or so forth. —

See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth; 60
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlaces, and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord!

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his music.

Rey. Well, my lord. 70

Pol. Farewell! — [*Exit REYNALDO*

Enter OPHELIA

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

Oph. Oh, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Pol. With what, in the name of God?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;
No hat upon his head; his stockings fouled,
Ungartered, and down-gyvèd to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;

And with a look so piteous in purpórt

80 As if he had been loosèd out of hell

To speak of horrors, — he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know;

But, truly, I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;

Then goes he to the length of all his arm;

And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,

He falls to such perusal of my face,

As he would draw it. Long time stayed he so;

At last, — a little shaking of mine arm,

90 And thrice his head thus waving up and down, —

He raised a sigh so piteous and profound

That it did seem to shatter all his bulk

And end his being: that done, he lets me go:

And, with his head over his shoulder turned,

He seemed to find his way without his eyes;

For out o' doors he went without their help,

And to the last bendéd their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.

This is the very ecstasy of love;

100 Whose violent property fordoes itself,

And leads the will to desperate undertakings,

As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry, —
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

Oph. No, my good lord; but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him: I feared he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy! 110
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which, being kept close, might
move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II

A Room in the Castle

Flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern!

Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation ; so I call it,
Since not the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,
10 I cannot dream of : I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And since so neighbored to his youth and humor,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time : so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures ; and to gather
So much as from occasions you may glean,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
That, opened, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talked of
you ;

20 And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile,
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks

As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent 30
To lay our services freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guilden-
stern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosen-
crantz :

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changèd son. — Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence and our prac-
tices
Pleasant and helpful to him !

Queen. Ay, amen !

[*Exeunt Ros., GUIL., and some Attendants*

Enter POLONIUS

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, 40
Are joyfully returned.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege.

I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king:
And I do think (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath used to do) that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

50 *King.* Oh, speak of that: that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them
in. — [Exit POLONIUS

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main, —
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall sift him. —

Re-enter POLONIUS with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

60 *Volt.* Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

His nephew's levies, which to him appeared
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,
But, better looked into, he truly found
It was against your highness: whereat grieved, —
That so his sickness, age, and impotence,
Was falsely borne in hand, — sends out arrests
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;
Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

70

[*Gives a paper*

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise;
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

King.

It likes us well;

80

And at our more considered time we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labor:
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:

Most welcome home !

[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS

Pol.

This business is well ended. —

My liege, and madam, to expostulate

What majesty should be, what duty is,

Why day is day, night night, and time is time,

Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.

90 Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,

And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,

I will be brief. Your noble son is mad :

Mad call I it : for, to define true madness,

What is't but to be nothing else but mad ?

But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.

That he is mad, 'tis true ; 'tis true 'tis pity ;

And pity 'tis, 'tis true : a foolish figure ;

But farewell it, for I will use no art.

100 Mad let us grant him then : and now remains

That we find out the cause of this effect ;

Or rather say, the cause of this defect ;

For this effect defective comes by cause :

Thus it remains and the remainder thus.

Perpend :

I have a daughter, — have, while she is mine, —

Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this: now gather and surmise.

[Reads] — *To the celestial and my soul's idol, the
most beautified Ophelia,* — 110

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase: *beautified* is a vile
phrase; but you shall hear. Thus:

[Reads] *In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.*

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

[Reads] *Doubt thou the stars are fire;
Doubt that the sun doth move;
Doubt truth to be a liar;
But never doubt I love.*

*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not 120
art to reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most
best, believe it. Adieu.*

*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst
this machine is to him, HAMLET.*

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me:
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Received his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

130 *King.* As of a man faithful and honorable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing, —

As I perceived it, I must tell you that,

Before my daughter told me, — what might you,

Or my dear majesty, your queen here, think,

If I had played the desk or table-book ;

Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb ;

Or looked upon this love with idle sight ;

What might you think ? No, I went round to work,

140 And my young mistress thus I did bespeak ;

Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star ;

This must not be : and then I precepts gave her

That she should lock herself from his resort,

Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

Which done, she took the fruits of my advice ;

And he, repulsèd, a short tale to make,

Fell into a sadness ; then into a fast ;

Thence to a watch ; thence into a weakness ;

Thence to a lightness ; and, by this declension,

150 Into the madness wherein now he raves

And all we mourn for.

King.

Do you think 'tis this ?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, I'd fain know
that,

That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
When it proved otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

[*Pointing to his head and shoulder*

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed,
Within the center.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks for hours to-
gether

160

Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does, indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him ;
Be you and I behind an arras then ;
Mark the encounter : if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

Queen. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes
reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away;

170 I'll board him presently. — Oh, give me leave; —

[*Exeunt KING, QUEEN, and Attendants*]

Enter HAMLET, reading

How does my good lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-'a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you're a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

180 *Pol.* That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion, — Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord. [*Aside*] Still harping on my daughter: — yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone: and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. — What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

190 *Pol.* What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, 200 you could go backward.

Pol. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't. — Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o' the air. — [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting be- 210 tween him and my daughter. — My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Pol. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. [*To POLONIUS*] God save you, sir!

[*Exit POLONIUS*]

220 *Guil.* My honored lord!

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern?—Ah, Rosencrantz?—Good lads, how do ye both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not over-happy;
On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

230 *Ham.* Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors? What's the news?

Ros. None, my lord; but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord?

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

240

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then, 'tis none to you: for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so! to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell 250
and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not
that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for
the very substance of the ambitious is merely the
shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly; and I hold ambition of so airy and
light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies; and our
monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' 260
shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay,
I cannot reason.

Ros., Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter; I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord : no other occasion.

270 *Ham.* Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you : and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear, a half-penny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, anything, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to color: I know the good king and queen
280 have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

Ros. [*Aside to GUILDENSTERN*] What say you?

Ham. [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you. —
If you love me, hold not off.

290

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late, — but wherefore I know not, — lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, — this brave o’erhanging firmament — this majestical roof fretted with golden 300 fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts. 310

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said *man delights not me*?

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer your service.

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall
320 not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't.—What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means
330 of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

Ham. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyranni-

cally clapped for't: these are now the fashion; and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose-quills, and 340 dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains them? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better,—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them 350 to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is't possible?

Guil. Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord: Hercules and his load too.

Ham. It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king 360 of Denmark; and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an

hundred ducats apiece, for his picture in little. There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. *[Flourish of trumpets within*

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in
370 this garb; lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter POLONIUS

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern; — and you too; — at each ear a hearer; that great baby you see there is
380 not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Ros. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. — You say right, sir; o' Monday morning; 'twas so, indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, —

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz!

390

Pol. Upon mine honor, —

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass, —

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

400

Pol. What treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why —

*One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he lovèd passing well.*

Pol. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my lord?

410

Ham. Why,

As by lot, God wot,

and then, you know,

It came to pass, as most like it was, —

The first row of the pious chanson will show you more: for look, where my abridgment comes.

Enter four or five Players

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all: — I am glad to see ye well: — welcome, good friends. — O, my old friend! Thy face is valanced since I saw thee
420 last; com'st thou to beard me in Denmark? — What! my young lady and mistress! By-r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. — Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see: we'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1 *Play.* What speech, my lord?

430 *Ham.* I heard thee speak me a speech once, — but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was, — as I received it,

and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine, — an excellent play, well digested in the scenes ; set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines, to make the matter savory ; nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation ; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as 440 sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved : 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido ; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line ; let me see, let me see ; —

The rugged Pyrrhus like the Hyrcanian beast. —

'tis not so ; it begins with Pyrrhus : —

*The rugged Pyrrhus, — he, whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couchèd in the ominous horse, — 450
Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared
With heraldry more dismal : head to foot
Now is he total gules ; horridly tricked
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons ;
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damnèd light
To their lord's murder : roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sizèd with coagulate gore,*

460 *With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus*
 Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So proceed you.

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken; with good
accent and good discretion.

1 *Play.* *Anon he finds him*
 Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
 Repugnant to command: unequal matched.
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
 But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
470 *The unnervèd father falls. Then senseless Ilium,*
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of reverend Priam, seemed i' the air to stick:
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood:
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.
 But, as we often see, against some storm,
480 *A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,*
 The bold wind speechless, and the orb below
 As hush as death: anon the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region: so, after Pyrrhus' pause,

*Arousèd vengeance sets him new a-work ;
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armor, forged for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam. —*

*Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power ;* 490
*Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,
As low as to the fiends !*

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's with your beard. —
*Pr'ythee, say on : he's for a jig or a tale, or he sleeps :
— say on ; come to Hecuba.*

1 Play. *But who, O who, had seen the mobled queen —*

Ham. *The mobled queen ?*

Pol. That's good : *mobled queen* is good. 500

1 Play. *Run barefoot up and down, threatening the
flame*

*With bisson rheum ; a clout about that head,
Where late the diadem stood ; and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemèd loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ; —
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced :*

*But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
510 In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamor that she made, —
Unless things mortal move them not at all, —
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.*

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his color and has tears in's eyes. — Pray you, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. — Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for
520 they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you lived.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. Odd's bodikins, man, much better! Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

530 *Pol.* Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow. [*Exit POL., with some of the Players*]

[*Aside to 1 Player*] Dost thou hear me, old friend ;
can you play *The Murder of Gonzago*?

1 *Play.* Ay, my lord.

Ham. [*Aside*] We'll ha't to-morrow night. You
could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or
sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't,
could you not?

1 *Play.* Ay, my lord.

540

Ham. [*Aside*] Very well. — Follow that lord ; and
look you mock him not. [*Exit Player*] My good
friends [*to Ros. and GUIL.*], I'll leave you till night :
you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' you! —

[*Exeunt ROSEN. and GUIL.*]

Now I am alone.

Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wanned ;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

550

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
560 And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property, and most dear life,
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
570 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the
throat,
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: bloody, bloody villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!

O, vengeance !

580

Why, what an ass am I ! this is most brave ;
That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must fall a-cursing, like a very trull,

A scullion !

Fie upon't ! foh ! About, my brain ! I have heard

That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,

Have by the very cunning of the scene

Been struck so to the soul that presently

They have proclaimed their malefactions ;

590

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players

Play something like the murder of my father

Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks ;

I'll tent him to the quick ; if he but blench,

I know my course. The spirit that I have seen

May be the devil : and the devil hath power

To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps

Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,

As he is very potent with such spirits,

600

Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds

More relative than this. The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[*Exit*

ACT III

SCENE I

A Room in the Castle

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

10 *Queen.* Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question; but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him to any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certain players

We o'er-raught on the way; of these we told
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it; they are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order 20
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true;
And he beseeched me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me

To hear him so inclined —
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSEN. and GUIL.*

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither, 30
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia.

Her father and myself (lawful espials)
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If 't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you. —

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish

40 That your good beauty be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honors.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit* QUEEN]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so please
you,

We will bestow ourselves. [*To* OPHELIA] Read on
this book,

That show of such an exercise may color
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this, —
'Tis too much proved, — that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

50 *King.* [*Aside*] Oh, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burden!

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt* KING and POLONIUS]

Enter HAMLET

Ham. To be, or not to be, — that is the question :
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, 60
And, by opposing end them ? — To die, — to sleep, —
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die ; — to sleep ; —
To sleep ! perchance to dream ! ay, there's the rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause : there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life ; 70
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin ? who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,

80 The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action. — Soft you now!

90 The fair Ophelia! — Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered.

Oph. Good my lord,

How does your honor for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you now, receive them.

Ham. No, not I; I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honored lord, I know right well you did;
And with them words of so sweet breath composed
100 As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha ! are you honest ?

Oph. My lord ?

Ham. Are you fair ?

Oph. What means your lordship ?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce 110
than with honesty ?

Ham. Ay, truly ; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness ; this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me ; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it : I loved you not.

120

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery ; I am myself indifferent honest ; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me ; I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious ; with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling

between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves,
130 all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.
Where's your father?


Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may
play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. Oh, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague
for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as
snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a
nunnery, go; farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry,
140 marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what
monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and
quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well
enough; God hath given you one face, and you make
yourselves another; you jig, you amble, and you lisp,
and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wan-
tonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it
hath made me mad. I say we will have no more mar-
150 riages; those that are married already, all but one,
shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nun-
nery, go. 

[*Exit*

Oph. Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword ;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mold of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite, down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, 160
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune, and harsh ;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy ; Oh, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Re-enter KING and POLONIUS

King. Love ? his affections do not that way tend ;
Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood ;
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger ; which for to prevent, 170
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down : he shall with speed to England
For the demand of our neglected tribute :
Haply, the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,

Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well; but yet do I believe
180 The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia,
You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief; let her be round with him;
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

190 *King.* It shall be so:
Madness in great ones must not unwatched go.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE II

A Hall in the Castle

Enter HAMLET and certain Players

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced
it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but, if you mouth
it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-

crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus: but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) the whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to 10 split the ears of the groundlings, who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise; I could have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod; pray you, avoid it.

1 *Play.* I warrant your honor.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything 20 so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now, this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance

o'erweigh a whole theater of others. Oh, there be
30 players that I have seen play, and heard others praise,
and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither
having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian,
pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed
that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had
made men and not made them well, they imitated
humanity so abominably.

1 *Play.* I hope we have reformed that indifferently
with us, sir.

Ham. Oh, reform it altogether. And let those
40 that play your clowns, speak no more than is set
down for them; for there be of them that will themselves
laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators
to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary
question of the play be then to be considered;
that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition
in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.
[*Exeunt Players*]

Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN
How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of
work?

50 *Pol.* And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. — [*Exit* POLONIUS]
Will you two help to hasten them?

Ros., Guil. We will, my lord.

[*Exeunt ROSEN. and GUIL.*]

Ham. What ho! Horatio!

Enter HORATIO

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

Hor. Oh, my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revénue hast but thy good spirits 60
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be
flattered?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath sealed thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those 70
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee. — Something too much of this. —
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.

80 I pr'ythee, when thou see'st that act a-foot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe mine uncle; if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damnèd ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor.

Well, my lord;

90 If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must be idle:
Get you a place.

*Danish march; flourish. Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS,
OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and other
Lords attendant, with the Guard carrying torches*

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish:
I eat the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed
capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet;
these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. — [*To POLONIUS*] My 100
lord, you played once in the university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a
good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar; I was killed i' the
Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital
a calf there. — Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me. 110

Ham. No, good mother; here's metal more at-
tractive.

Pol. [*To the KING*] Oh, ho! do you mark that?

Oph. You are merry.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker. What should
a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheer-

fully my mother looks, and my father died within 's
120 two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay, then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year; but by-'r-lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is, "For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot."

Hautboys play. The dumb show enters

Enter a KING and a QUEEN, very lovingly; the QUEEN embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the KING's ears, and exit. The QUEEN returns; finds the KING dead, and makes passionate action. The POISONER, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The POISONER woos the QUEEN with gifts; she seems

loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. [Exeunt

Oph. What means this, my lord? 130

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue

Ham. We shall know by this fellow; the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show.

Oph. I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy, 140
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Ham. Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter two Players, KING and QUEEN

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phæbus' cart gone round

Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbèd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen

150 *About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.*

P. Queen. *So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
For woman's fear and love holds quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremity.*

160 *Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,
And as my love is sized, my fear is so.
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear,
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.*

P. King. *'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly
too;*

*My operant powers their functions leave to do,
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honored, beloved; and haply, one as kind
For husband shalt thou —*

P. Queen. *O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast;*

170 *In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.*

Ham. [Aside] Wormwood, wormwood.

P. Queen. *The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.*

P. King. *I do believe you think what now you speak,
But, what we do determine oft we break.*

*Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth but poor validity ;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.*

180

*Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt ;
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.*

*The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy ;
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament ;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.*

*This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change, 190
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,*

*Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favorite flies ;
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies ;
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;
For who not needs shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.*

But, orderly to end where I begun, —

200 *Our wills and fates do so contráry run,
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own;
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.*

P. Queen. *Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy*
210 *Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!*

Ham. If she should break it now!

P. King. *'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a
while;*

*My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep.* [Sleeps]

P. Queen. *Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain.*

[Exit]

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

220 *Ham. Oh, but she'll keep her word.*

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offense in't?

Ham. No, no; they do but jest, poison in jest; no offense i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna; Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work; but what of that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it 230 touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung. —

Enter LUCIANUS

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come; — the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

240

Luc. *Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;*

Confederate season, else no creatures seeing;

*Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.*

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate.
His name's Gonzago; the story is extant, and writ in
choice Italian; you shall see anon how the murderer
250 gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises!

Ham. What, frightened with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light.— Away!

All. Lights, lights, lights!

[Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep;

So runs the world away.

260

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers,—if the
rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me,—with two
Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a fellow-
ship in a cry of players, sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, ay.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very — pajock.

270

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for
a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning, —

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha! — Come, some music! come, the
recorders!

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike, — he likes it not, perdy.

280

Come, some music!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir, —

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is in his retirement marvelous distempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, rather with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer
290 to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him
to his purgation, would perhaps plunge him into far
more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some
frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir: pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the
300 right breed. If it shall please you to make me a
wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment; if not, your pardon and my return shall be the
end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's
diseased; but, sir, such answer as I can make you
shall command; or rather, as you say, my mother:
therefore no more, but to the matter; my mother, you
310 say, —

Ros. Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck
her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me. 320

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but *While the grass grows*, — the proverb is something musty. — 330

Re-enter Players with recorders

Oh, the recorders! let me see one. — To withdraw with you: — why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. Oh, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

340 *Guil.* Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Ros. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing
350 you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. S'blood! do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.—

Re-enter POLONIUS

God bless you, sir !

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, 360
and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in
shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by. —

[*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent. — I will 370
come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

Ham. *By and by* is easily said. [*Exit* POLONIUS]
— Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt* ROS., GUIL., HOR., etc.]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world ; now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft ! now to my
mother. —

380 O heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom ;
Let me be cruel, not unnatural :
I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites ;
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent !

[*Exit*

SCENE III

A Room in the Castle

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you,
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you ;
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will ourselves provide :
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe,
10 That live and feed upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound

With all the strength and armor of the mind
To keep itself from noyance; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone; but like a gulf doth draw
What's near it with it; it is a massy wheel,
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoined; which, when it falls, 20
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros., Guil.

We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Enter POLONIUS

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet;
Behind the arras I'll convey myself
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home;
And, as you said, and wisely was it said, 30
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear

The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege ;
I'll call upon you e'er you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

King.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit POLONIUS*]

Oh, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven ;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder ! — Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will ;
40 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow ? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offense ?
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestallèd ere we come to fall,
50 Or pardoned being done ? Then I'll look up ;
My fault is past. But, oh, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn ? *Forgive me my foul murder ?*
That cannot be, since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder, —
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

May one be pardoned and retain the offense?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law ; but 'tis not so above ; 60
There, is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature ; and we ourselves compelled,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence. What then ? what rests ?
Try what repentance can : what can it not ?
Yet what can it when one can not repent ?
O wretched state ! O bosom black as death !
O limèd soul that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged ! Help, angels ! make assay !
Bow, stubborn knees ; and, heart with strings of steel, 70
Be soft as sinews of the new born babe !
All may be well ! [Retires, and kneels

Enter HAMLET

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying ;
And now I'll do't ; — and so he goes to heaven ;
And so am I revenged ? That would be scanned :
A villain kills my father ; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
Oh, this is hire and salary, not revenge.

80 He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him; and am I then revenged,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No.

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk-asleep or in his rage;
90 At gaming, swearing; or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;
And that his soul may be as damned, and black,
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays. —
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

[Exit

King. [Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts
remain below;

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

[Exit

SCENE IV

*The Queen's Closet**Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS*

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.

Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screened and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll 'sconce me even here.

Pray you, be round with him.

Ham. [*Within*] Mother, mother, mother!

Queen. I'll warrant you;

Fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming.

[*POLONIUS hides behind the arras*]

Enter HAMLET

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended. 10

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle
tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet?

Ham. What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so :
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife ;
And — would it were not so ! — you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can
speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down ; you shall
not budge ;

You go not till I set you up a glass
20 Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do ? thou wilt not murder
me ?

Help, help, ho !

Pol. [*Behind*] What, ho ! help, help, help !

Ham. [*Drawing*] How now ; a rat ?
Dead, for a ducat, dead.

[HAMLET makes a pass through the arras]

Pol. [*Behind*] Oh, I am slain.

[*Falls and dies*]

Queen. O me, what hast thou done ?

Ham. Nay, I know not ;
Is it the king ?

[*Lifts up the arras, and discovers* POLONIUS]

Queen. Oh, what a rash and bloody deed is this !

Ham. A bloody deed ! almost as bad, good mother,
30 As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king?

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word. —
[*To POL.*] Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!

I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger. —
Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,
And let me wring your heart: for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damnèd custom have not brazed it so
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag
thy tongue 40
In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths; oh, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words; heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass, 50
With tristful visage, as against the doom,

Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen.

Ay me, what act,

That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

✓ *Ham.* Look here upon this picture and on this; —
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten or command;
A station like the herald Mercury,
60 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man:
This was your husband. — Look you now, what
follows:

Here is your husband; like a mildewed ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. — Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
70 The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion: but sure that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,

Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserved some quantity of choice,
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all, 80
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.

O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire; proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardor gives the charge;
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more;
Thou turnest mine eyes into my very soul; 90
And there I see such black and grainèd spots
As will not leave their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
Stewed in corruption —

Queen. Oh, speak to me no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet!

Ham. A murderer and a villain;

A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings,
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

100 *Queen.* No more!

Ham. A king of shreds and patches:—

Enter Ghost

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards!—What would your gracious
figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
Oh, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: this visitation
110 Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

But look! amazement on thy mother sits;
Oh, step between her and her fighting soul;
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,

That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse ?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep ;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements, 120
Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look ?

Ham. On him ! on him ! — Look you, how pale he
glares !

His form and cause conjoined, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. — Do not look upon me ;
Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects ; then what I have to do
Will want true color ; tears, perchance, for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this ?

Ham. Do you see nothing there ? 130

Queen. Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear ?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there ! look how it steals
away !

My father, in his habit as he lived !

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal !

[*Exit Ghost*

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain ;
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

Ham. Ecstasy !

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
140 And make as healthful music ; it is not madness
That I have uttered ; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks ;
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;
Repent what's past ; avoid what is to come ;
150 And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. — Forgive me this my virtue :
For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg ;
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in
twain.

Ham. Oh, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night : but go not to mine uncle's bed ;

Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat, 160
Of habits evil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either shame the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night;
And when you are desirous to be blessed, 170
I'll blessing beg of you. — For this same lord,

[*Pointing to* POLONIUS

I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so, —
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him — So again, good night! —
[*Aside*] I must be cruel, only to be kind;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind. —
One word more, good lady.

Queen.

What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do: 180
Let the bloat king

Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know:
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
190 Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep
And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assured, if words be made of
 breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England; you know that?

Queen. Alack,
I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters sealed; and my two school-
 fellows, —
Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged, —
200 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work,
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard,

But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon. Oh, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.

This man shall set me packing.

Mother, good night. — Indeed, this counselor

Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,

Who was in life a foolish prating knave.

210

Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you :—

Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS*

ACT IV

SCENE I

A Room in the Castle

*Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDEN-
STERN*

King. There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves

You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night?

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend

Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,

10 Whips out his rapier, cries *A rat, a rat!*

And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

King.

O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there;

His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answered?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrained, and out of haunt,
This mad young man; but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit, 20
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath killed;
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed 30
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse. — Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Friends both, go join you with some further aid;
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragged him.
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body

Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this. —

[*Exeunt* Ros. and GUIL.]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends ;
And let them know, both what we mean to do,
40 And what's untimely done ; so, haply, slander —
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, — may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. Oh, come away !
My soul is full of discord and dismay. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II

Another Room in the Castle

Enter HAMLET

Ham. Safely stowed.

Ros., Guil. [*Within*] Hamlet ! lord Hamlet !

Ham. But soft, what noise ? who calls on Hamlet ?
Oh, here they come.

Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead
body ?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

10

Ham. That I can keep your counsel and not mine
own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! — what
replication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance,
his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the
king best service in the end; he keeps them, like an
ape doth nuts, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed,
to be last swallowed; when he needs what you have
gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall
be dry again. 20

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it; a knavish speech sleeps in a
foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is,
and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is
not with the body. The king is a thing —

Guil. A *thing*, my lord?

Ham. Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and
all after. 30

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III

*Another Room in the Castle**Enter KING, attended*

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose !
Yet must not we put the strong law on him ;
He's loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes ;
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weighed,
But never the offense. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause ; diseases desperate grown
10 By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all. —

Enter ROSENCRANTZ

How now ! what hath befallen ?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he ?

Ros. Without, my lord ; guarded, to know your
pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. *At supper?* Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten; a 20
certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him.
Your worm is your only emperor for diet; we fat all
creatures else to fat us; and we fat ourselves for mag-
gots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but varia-
ble service, two dishes, but to one table; that's the
end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat
of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that
worm.

30

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go
a progress through a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your mes-
senger find him not there, seek him i' the other place
yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this
month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into
the lobby.

40 *King.* Go seek him there. [*To some Attendants*
Ham. He will stay till ye come.

[*Exeunt Attendants*

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee
hence

With fiery quickness: therefore, prepare thyself;
The bark is ready and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and everything is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

50 *Ham.* I see a cherub that sees them.—

But come; for England!—Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: father and mother is man and
wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother.
—Come, for England. [*Exit*

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed
aboard;

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night:
Away; for everything is sealed and done

That else leans on the affair : pray you, make haste. —

[*Exeunt Ros. and GUIL.*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught, — 60

As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

Pays homage to us — thou may'st not coldly set

Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,

By letters conjuring to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;

For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

And thou must cure me ; till I know 'tis done,

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. [*Exit* 70

SCENE IV

A Plain in Denmark

Enter FORTINBRAS, a Captain, and Soldiers marching

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king ;

Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras

Claims the conveyance of a promised march

Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

If that his majesty would aught with us,

We shall express our duty in his eye,

And let him know so.

Cap. I will do't, my lord.

For. Go softly on.

[*Exeunt* FORTINBRAS and Soldiers

Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and
Others

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

10 *Ham.* How purposed, sir,
I pray you?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who
Commands them, sir?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?

Cap. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
20 Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrisoned.

Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand
ducats

Will not debate the question of this straw;
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. — I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi' you, sir. [Exit

Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?

Ham. I will be with you straight. Go a little
before. [Exeunt all except HAMLET 30

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event, — 40
A thought which, quartered, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, — I do not know
Why yet I live to say, "This thing's to do,"
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me;

Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puffed,
Makes mouths at the invisible event;

- 50 Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep? while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
60 That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain?— Oh, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [*Exit*

SCENE V

Elsinore. *A Room in the Castle*

Enter QUEEN and HORATIO

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Hor. She is importunate, indeed distract ;
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have ?

Hor. She speaks much of her father ; says she
hears

There's tricks i' the world ; and hems, and beats her
heart ;

Spurns enviously at straws ; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense ; her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshapèd use of it doth move
The hearers to collection ; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts ; 10
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield
them,

Indeed would make one think there would be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen. Let her come in.

[*Exit HORATIO*

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss;
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
20 It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter HORATIO with OPHELIA

Oph. Where is the Beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia?

Oph. [*Sings*]

*How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle-hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.*

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] *He is dead and gone, lady,*

30 *He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.*

O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia, —

Oph. Pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] *White his shroud as the mountain snow. —*

Enter KING

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. [*Sings*]

*Larded with sweet flowers ;
Which bewept to the grave did go,
With true love showers.*

King. How do you, pretty lady? 40

Oph. Well, God 'ield you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray you, let us have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this :

[*Sings*] *To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.*

50

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel.—

Come, my coach! — Good night, ladies; good night,
sweet ladies; good night, good night. [Exit

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I
pray you — [Exit HORATIO

Oh, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
60 All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions! First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and
whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but
greenly,

In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts;
70 Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France:
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggared,
Will nothing stick our persons to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,

Like to a murdering-piece, in many places

Gives us superfluous death. [A noise within

Queen.

Alack, what noise is this?

King. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard
the door. —

80

Enter a Gentleman

What is the matter?

Gent.

Save yourself, my lord;

The ocean, overpeering of his list,

Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste

Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,

O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;

And as the world were now but to begin,

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,

The ratifiers and props of every word,

They cry, *Choose we ; Laertes shall be king!*

Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds, 90

Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!

Oh, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

[*Noise within*

King. The doors are broke.

Enter LAERTES, armed ; Danes following

Laer. Where is the king?—Sirs, stand you all without.

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Danes. We will, we will.

[*They retire without the door*]

Laer. I thank you: keep the door.—O thou vile king,

Give me my father.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard.

100 *King.* What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incensed.—Let him go, Gertrude.—

Speak, man.

Laer. Where's my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled
with. 110

To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes: only I'll be revenged
Most thoroughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world:
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes, 120

If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my
arms;

And like the kind life-rendering pelican
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.

130 That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce,
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [*Within*] Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?—

Re-enter OPHELIA

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
140 Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—
O heavens! is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. [*Sings*]

*They bore him barefaced on the bier;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
And on his grave rains many a tear;—*

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade
150 revenge,

It could not move thus.

Oph. [*Sings*]

*You must sing a-down a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.*

O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward,
that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance :
pray, love, remember : and there is pansies, that's
for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness ; thoughts and re- 160
membrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines ;
there's rue for you ; and here's some for me ; we may
call it herb-of-grace o' Sundays ; oh, you must wear
your rue with a difference. — There's a daisy ; I would
give you some violets ; but they withered all when my
father died ; they say he made a good end, —

[*Sings*] *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favor and to prettiness. 170

Oph. [*Sings*]

*And will he not come again ?
And will he not come again ?*

*No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.*

*His beard was white as snow;
All flaxen was his poll;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan!
God ha' mercy on his soul!*

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi'
you! [Exit

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must cômune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand

They find us touched, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,

190 To you in satisfaction; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labor with your soul
To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure burial —

No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation —
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.

King.

So you shall;

And where the offense is, let the great axe fall.

I pray you, go with me.

[*Exeunt* 200]

SCENE VI

Another Room in the Castle

Enter HORATIO and a Servant

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?

Serv. Sailors, sir;

They say they have letters for you.

Hor.

Let them come in. —

[*Exit* Servant]

I do not know from what part of the world

I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors

1 *Sail.* God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1 *Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir, — it comes from the ambassador

10 that was bound for England,—if your name be
Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [Reads]

Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor; in the grapple I boarded them; on the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy; but they knew
20 *what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosen-*
crantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;
30 And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them.

[Exeunt]

SCENE VII

*Another Room in the Castle**Enter KING and LAERTES*

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance
seal,

And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears; but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirred up.

King. Oh, for two special reasons,
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed 10
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his
mother

Lives almost by his looks; and for myself, —
My virtue or my plague, be it either which,
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,

Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
20 Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timbered for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aimed them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost;
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections. — But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that; you must not
30 think

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more;
I loved your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine, —

Enter a Messenger

How now, what news?

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet;
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet? Who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not.
They were given me by Claudio, he received them 40
Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them. —
Leave us. [Exit Messenger

[Reads] *High and mighty, You shall know I am set
naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave
to see your kingly eyes; when I shall, first asking your
pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and
more strange return.* HAMLET.

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character. *Naked,*— 50
And in a postscript here he says *alone*.
Can you advise me?

Laer. I am lost in it, my lord. But let him come:
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
Thus didest thou.

King. If it be so, Laertes, —
As how should it be so? how otherwise? —
Will you be ruled by me?

Laer.

Ay, my lord;

So you will not o'er-rule me to a peace.

60 *King.* To thine own peace. If he be now returned, —
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, — I will work him
To an exploit now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice,
And call it accident.

Laer.

My lord, I will be ruled;

The rather, if you could devise it so

That I might be the organ.

King.

It falls right.

70 You have been talked of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine; your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.

Laer.

What part is that, my lord?

King. A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,

Importing health and graveness. — Two months since, 80
Here was a gentleman of Normandy ; —
I've seen myself, and served against, the French,
And they can well on horseback ; but this gallant
Had witchcraft in't ; he grew unto his seat ;
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorpsed and demi-natured
With the brave beast ; so far he topped my thought,
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman, was't?

King. A Norman.

90

Laer. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well ; he is the brooch, indeed,
And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defense,
And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you ; the scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye, 100
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,

That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this, —

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father,
110 But that I know love is begun by time,
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too-much: that we would do
We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
120 As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this *should* is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home;
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence, 130
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together,
And wager on your heads; he, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't;
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank, 140
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratched withal: I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this ;

Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,

150 And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assayed ; therefore this project
Should have a back or second that might hold,
If this should blast in proof. Soft ! — let me see ! —
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings —
I ha't :

When in your motion you are hot and dry, —

As make your bouts more violent to that end, —

And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce ; whereon but sipping,

160 If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise ? —

Enter QUEEN

How now, sweet queen !

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow. — Your sister's drowned, Laertes.

Laer. Drowned ! — Oh, where ?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream ;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
170 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,



“THERE WITH FANTASTIC GARLANDS DID SHE COME
OF CROW-FLOWERS, NETTLES, DAISIES, AND LONG PURPLES.”



But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them ;
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke ;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up ;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element ; but long it could not be, 180
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Laer. Alas then, is she drowned ?

Queen. Drowned, drowned.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears ; but yet
It is our trick ; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will ; when these are gone,
The woman will be out. — Adieu, my lord ;
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze, 190
But that this folly douts it. [Exit

King. Let's follow, Gertrude ;
How much I had to do to calm his rage !
Now fear I this will give it start again ;
Therefore let's follow. [Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I

A Church-Yard

Enter two Clowns, with spades, &c.

1 *Clown*. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that willfully seeks her own salvation?

2 *Clo*. I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight; the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1 *Clo*. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?

2 *Clo*. Why, 'tis found so.

1 *Clo*. It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else.
10 For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

2 *Clo*. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

1 *Clo*. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him

and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own 20 life.

2 *Clo.* But is this law?

1 *Clo.* Ay, marry, is't; crowner's-quest law.

2 *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian. — Come, my spade. There is no ancient 30 gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* A' was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none.

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the scripture? The scripture says Adam digged; could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee; if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself — 40

2 *Clo.* Go to.

1 *Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill; now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows
50 may do well to thee. To't again; come.

2 *Clo.* 'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that and unyoke.

2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clo.* To't.

2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance

1 *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say *a grave-*
60 *maker*; the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit* 2 Clown]

1 *Clo.* [*Digs, and sings*]

In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought, it was very sweet,

To contract, Oh! the time, for, Ah! my behove,

Oh, methought there was nothing meet.

Ham. Hath this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

70

Ham. 'Tis e'en so : the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 *Clo.* [*Sings*]

*But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath clawed me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land,
As if I had never been such.*

[*Throws up a skull*]

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once : how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder ! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now 80 o'er-reaches ; one that would circumvent God, might it not ?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier, which could say, *Good-morrow, sweet lord ! How dost thou, good lord ?* This might be my lord Such-a-one, that praised my lord Such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it, might it not ?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so; and now my Lady Worm's; 90 chapless, and knocked about the mazard with a sexton's spade; here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

1 *Clo.* [*Sings*]

*A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet:
Oh, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[*Throws up another skull*]

Ham. There's another; why may not that be the 100 skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries; is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and 110 double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair

of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.— Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1 *Clo.* Mine, sir. —

120

[*Sings*] *Oh, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in't.

1 *Clo.* You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine; 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1 *Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from 130
me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

1 *Clo.* For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then?

1 *Clo.* For none, neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

1 *Clo.* One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak
140 by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the
lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of
it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the
peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls
his kibe. — How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1 *Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that
day that our last king Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

1 *Clo.* Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that;
it was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he
150 that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry; why was he sent into England?

1 *Clo.* Why, because a' was mad; a' shall recover
his wits there; or, if a' do not, it's no great matter
there.

Ham. Why?

1 *Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the
men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

1 *Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How 'strangely'?

160

1 *Clo.* 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1 *Clo.* Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

1 *Clo.* I'faith, if a' be not rotten before a' die a' will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

170

1 *Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade that a' will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1 *Clo.* A mad fellow's it was; whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1 *Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! 'a 180 poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Ham. This?

1 *Clo.* E'en that.

Ham. Let me see — [*Takes the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick! — I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here
190 hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. — Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come; make her laugh at that. — Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

200 *Ham.* Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? puh!

[*Puts down the skull*]

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.



Ham. "ALAS POOR YORICK!"



Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead 210 it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-bairrel?

*Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;
Oh, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw !*

But soft! but soft! aside!—here comes the king,

Enter Priests, &c., in procession: the corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners following; KING, QUEEN, their Trains, &c.

The queen, the courtiers: who is that they follow? 220
And with such maimèd rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life; 'twas of some estate.
Couch we a while, and mark.

[Retiring with HORATIO]

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham.

That is Laertes,

A very noble youth: mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

1 *Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warrantise; her death was doubtful;
230 And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her;
Yet here she is allowed her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

1 *Priest.* No more be done!

We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

240 *Laer.* Lay her i' the earth; —
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! — I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen. Sweets to the sweet; farewell!

[*Scattering flowers*

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,

And not t' have strewed thy grave.

Laer.

Oh, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursèd head

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense

250

Deprived thee of! — Hold off the earth a while,

Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

[Leaps into the grave]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,

Till of this flat a mountain you have made,

To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head

Of blue Olympus.

Ham. [Advancing]

What is he whose grief

Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow

Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand

Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,

Hamlet the Dane!

[Leaps into the grave]

Laer.

The devil take thy soul!

260

[Grappling with him]

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.

I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;

For, though I am not splenitive and rash,

Yet have I something in me dangerous,

Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!

King. Pluck them asunder.

Queen.

Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen, —

Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave*

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

270 *Queen.* O my son, what theme?

Ham. I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. — What wilt thou do for her?

King. Oh, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. Come, show me what thou'lt do;
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear
thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?

I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?

280 To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her, and so will I:

And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning zone,

Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, and thou'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen.

This is mere madness;

And thus awhile the fit will work on him ;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.

Ham.

Hear you, sir,

290

What is the reason that you use me thus ?

I loved you ever. — But it is no matter ;

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [*Exit*

King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him. —

[*Exit* HORATIO

[*To* LAERTES] Strengthen your patience in our last
night's speech ;

We'll put the matter to the present push. —

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son. —

This grave shall have a living monument :

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;

300

Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II

A Hall in the Castle

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO

Ham. So much for this, sir ; now let me see the
other ;

You do remember all the circumstance ?

Hor. Remember it, my lord?

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep; methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly, —
And praised be rashness for it, — let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should
teach us

10 There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,
Fingered their packet, and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio, —
O royal knavery! — an exact command,
20 Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more
leisure.

But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

Hor. I beseech you.

Ham. Being thus be-netted round with villanies, —
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains, 30
They had begun the play, — I sat me down;
Devised a new commission; wrote it fair; —
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labored much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service: — wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm should flourish, 40
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such like *as's* of great charge,
That on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allowed.

Hor. How was this sealed?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.

I had my father's signet in my purse,
50 Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscribed it; gave't the impression; placed it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this
employment;

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.
60 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell-incensèd points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me now upon —
He that hath killed my king, and stained my mother;
Popped in between the election and my hopes;
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage — is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damned,
To let this canker of our nature come

In further evil?

70

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England

What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short; the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say *One*.
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his; I'll court his favors;
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor.

Peace! who comes here? 80

Enter OSRIC

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. — [*Aside to HOR.*]
Dost know this water-fly?

Hor. [*Aside to HAM.*] No, my good lord.

Ham. [*Aside to HOR.*] Thy state is the more gracious,
for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and
fertile; let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall
stand at the king's mess: 'tis a chough, but, as I say,
spacious in the possession of dirt.

90 *Osr.* Sweet lord, if your friendship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for
100 my complexion.

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, — as 'twere, — I cannot tell how. — But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter.

Ham. I beseech you, remember —

[HAMLET moves him to put on his hat

Osr. Nay, in good faith; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing; 110 indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in

you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory; and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, 120 nothing more.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

130

Hor. [*Aside to HAM.*] His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant —

Ham. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. — Well, sir.

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare
140 with him in excellence; but to know a man well,
were to know himself.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons; but, well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six
Barbary horses; against the which he has imponed,
150 as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with
their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so; three of the
carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive
to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very
liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. [*Aside to Ham.*] I knew you must be edified
by the margent ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane to the
160 matter if we could carry cannon by our sides; I would
it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary
horses against six French swords, their assigns, and
three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French

bet against the Danish. Why is this *imponed*, as you call it?

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer. 170

Ham. How if I answer No?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall; if it please his majesty, it is the breathing-time of day with me; let the foils be brought; the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so? 180

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham. Yours, yours. [*Exit OSRIC*] — He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply with his dug before he
190 sucked it. Thus has he, and many more of the same
bevy, that, I know the drossy age dotes on, only got
the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter;
a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through
and through the most fond and winnowed opinions;
and do but blow them to their trial the bubbles are
out.

Enter a Lord

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you
by young Osric, who brings back to him that you at-
tend him in the hall; he sends to know if your pleas-
200 ure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take
longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow
the king's pleasure; if his fitness speaks, mine is
ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as
now.

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming
down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle
210 entertainment to Laertes, before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so ; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice ; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart ; but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord, —

Ham. It is but foolery ; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike anything, obey it ; I will ²²⁰ forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit ; we defy augury ; there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not to come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come ; the readiness is all ; since no man has aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes ? Let be.

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants, with foils and gauntlets ; a table and flagons of wine on it

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The KING puts the hand of LAERTES into that of*
HAMLET

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir ; I have done you wrong ;

- 230 But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,
How I am punished with a sore distraction.
What I have done,
That might your nature, honor, and exception,
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet;
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.
- 240 Who does it then? His madness; if't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,

- Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge; but in my terms of honor
- 250 I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation,
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungored. But till that time

I do receive your offered love like love,
And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play. —
Give us the foils. — Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir. 260

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric. — Cousin
Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord;
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both.
But since he's bettered, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy; let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well. — These foils have all a
length?

Osr. Ay, my good lord.

[*They prepare to play*

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table. — 270
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
280 The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
Now the king drinks to Hamlet! — Come, begin; —
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play*

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well; — again.

King. Stay; give me drink. — Hamlet, this pearl is
thine;

Here's to thy health. —

[*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within*

Give him the cup.

Ham. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile —

Come. [*They play*] Another hit; what say you?

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath. — 290

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows ;

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam !

King. Gertrude, do not drink !

Queen. I will, my lord ; I pray you, pardon me.

King. [*Aside*] It is the poisoned cup ! it is too late !

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam ; by-and-by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think it.

Laer. [*Aside*] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes ; you but dally ; 300
I pray you, pass with your best violence ;

I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so ? come on. [*They play*

Osr. Nothing, neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[*LAER. wounds HAM. ; then, in scuffling, they
change rapiers, and HAM. wounds LAER.*

King. Part them ! they are incensed.

Ham. Nay, come, again. [*The QUEEN falls*

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho !

Hor. They bleed on both sides. — How is it, my lord ?

Osr. How is't, Laertes ?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe,
Osr. ;

310 I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen ?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my dear
Hamlet, —

The drink, the drink ! — I am poisoned ! [Dies

Ham. O villany ! — Ho ! Let the door be locked :

Treachery ! seek it out. [LAERTES falls

Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain ;
No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour of life ;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand.

320 Unbated, and envenomed ; the foul practice
Hath turned itself on me ; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again ; thy mother's poisoned ;
I can no more ; — the king, — the king's to blame.

Ham. The point envenomed too ! —

Then, venom, to thy work ! [Stabs the KING

All. Treason ! treason !

King. Oh, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damnèd
Dane,

Drink off this potion! — Is thy union here?

Follow my mother. [KING dies

Laer. He is justly served; 330

It is a poison tempered by himself. —

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet;

Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,

Nor thine on me! [Dies

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee. —

I am dead, Horatio. — Wretched queen, adieu! —

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,

That are but mates or audience to this act,

Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, death,

Is strict in his arrest) oh, I could tell you — 340

But let it be. — Horatio, I am dead;

Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it;

I am more an antique Roman than a Dane;

Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup; let go; by heaven I'll have it.

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me !
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

350 Absent thee from felicity awhile,

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. — [*March afar off, and shot within*
What warlike noise is this?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. Oh, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit ;
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras ; he has my dying voice ;

360 So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited — The rest is silence. [*Dies*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. — Good night,
sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest ! —
Why does the drum come hither ? [*March within*

Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, with
drum, colors, and Attendants

Fort. Where is this sight ?

Hor. What is it ye would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry cries on havoc. — O proud
death!

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

1 *Amb.* The sight is dismal; 370
And our affairs from England come too late;
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfilled,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies 380
High on a stage be placèd to the view;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about: so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,

And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fallen on the inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,

390 And call the noblest to the audience.

For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more;
But let this same be presently performed,
E'en while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

Fort. Let four captains

Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;

400 For he was likely, had he been put on,

To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music, and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him. —

Take up the bodies. — Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss. —

Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

[*A dead march*

[*Exeunt, bearing off the bodies; after which a peal
of ordnance is shot off*

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS. — O. E. = Old English; H. Ger. = High German (the German usually taught in our schools is N. H. G. = New High German); L. Ger. = Low German (= English); N. Fr. = Norman-French; Gr. = Greek; Lat. = Latin; Dim. = diminutive; Cogs. = cognates; Cf. (= confer), compare; Cl. P. S. = Clarendon Press Series; and Co. S. = Collins's Series. In the naming of plays short titles have been used. Thus the *Taming of the Shrew* is mentioned as *The Shrew*; *All's Well that Ends Well* as *All's Well*; *Troilus and Cressida* as *Troilus*. For Shakespeare, we have always printed S.

ACT FIRST

SCENE 1

Elsinore, or Helsingör, is on the east coast of Zealand, about twenty-four miles from Copenhagen. On a point near it stands the castle of Kronborg, built in 1577, which commands the entrance to the Baltic. The first scene is in this castle.

'The compression of the scene is wonderful, and there is, perhaps, no passage in any drama which exhibits equal variety in the same space. The fright of Bernardo, his suppressed emotion, his dislike to be by himself, the unconsciousness of Francisco, the levity of Horatio, the abstraction and highly wrought feelings of Marcellus, the intense excitement in the greeting with Bernardo, are all brought out clear and well defined in about twenty lines. Condensed and rapid as is the dialogue, it is complete.' — *Quarterly Review*, Vol. lxxix. 1847, p. 318.

4. **Upon your hour.** As Francisco speaks, the castle clock strikes twelve. Coleridge says, 'Note the natural and easy tone of the dialogue, which contains no labored description of the night or of the scenery. We seem to be accidentally overhearing a conversation.'

6. **Much** = great. For the use of *much* with the plural, cf. Luke xii. 19: 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.' — **Bitter** for *bitterly*. Dr. Abbott (sect. 1) says, 'In Early English many adverbs were formed from adjectives by adding *e* (dative) to the positive degree; as *bright*, adj.; *brighte*, adv. In time the *e* was dropped, but the adverbial use was kept. Hence, from a false analogy, many adjectives (such as *excellent*), which could never form adverbs in *e*, were used as adverbs. We still say colloquially, *Come quick*; *the moon shines bright*.'

8. **Not a mouse stirring.** Coleridge says, 'The attention to minute sounds — naturally associated with the recollection of minute objects, and the more familiar and trifling, the more impressive from the unusualness of their producing any impression at all — gives a philosophic pertinency to this last image; but it has likewise its dramatic use and purpose.'

11. **Rivals, partners.** The quarto of 1603 has the reading *partners*. *Rivals* were those who lived on the same stream (*rinus*), to which they had a common right for purposes of irrigation, etc.; hence frequent disputes between those who lived up or down stream.

16. **Give you** = God give you.

17. **A piece of him.** Cf. the ordinary phrase: *Something like him*.

19. **What.** The O. E. interjection, generally used to call a person; sometimes also used as an exclamation of impatience. — **This thing . . . again.** Coleridge points out that 'even the word *again* has its *credibilizing* effect,' and how Horatio rises from the phrase *this thing* to *this dreaded sight*, and then to *this apparition*.

21. **Fantasy**, imagination. From Gr. *phantasia*, the power of making things *appear* (from *phainō*, I make to appear; cogs. are *phenomenon* and *phantasy*, which last has been contracted into *fancy*).

27. **Approve**, confirm, prove. Cf. *Merchant*, III. ii. 79, where Bassanio talks of 'approving an error with a text.'

29. **Assail and fortified** are terms such as a soldier would use.

31. **What**, with an account of what.

34. **Pole** = pole-star.

35. **Made his course**. S. has also the phrases: *To hold a course; to run a course; to take a course*. — **Illume**. The only instance of the word in S.

37. **The bell** = the clock. (In H. Ger. *Glocke* still means *bell*.) — **Beating** = striking.

38. **Break thee for thou**. Dr. Abbott (sect. 212) says, "'Look thee," "hark thee,"' are to be explained by euphonic reasons (and not as reflexive). *Thee*, thus used, follows imperatives which, being in themselves emphatic, require an unemphatic pronoun. The Elizabethans reduced *thou* to *thee*.

40. **Scholar**, able to read Latin — the language employed in exorcising a spirit.

42. **Most like**. Coleridge says, 'Note the judgment displayed in having the two persons present, who, as having seen the Ghost before, are naturally eager in confirming their former opinions; whilst the sceptic is silent, and after having been twice addressed by his friends, answers with two hasty syllables, *Most like*, and a confession of horror. Words are wasted on those who feel, and to those who do not feel the exquisite judgment of S. in this scene what can be said?'

43. **Spoke to**. In allusion to the belief that a ghost will not speak until it has first been spoken to.

44. **Usurp'st . . . together with**. A daring zeugma.

The Ghost usurps (= invades) the quiet night and also the fair form of the buried king.

47. **Sometimes** = sometime, that is, at one time.

53. **On't** = of it. — **Might not**, in the old sense of *could not*. The same sense is still found in the noun *might*, from *may*, the old form of which was *magan*.

55. **Avouch**, the only instance of this verb used as a noun by S.

59. **Norway** = the king of Norway.

60. **Parle**, parley. The usual meaning in S. is that of a conference with enemies regarding peace or a truce.

61. **Sledged Polacks**, Poles on sledges. Webster (quoted by Mr. Rolfe) has the phrase, 'Like a shav'd Polack.' The word does not occur anywhere else in S. (except in V. ii. 352); nor does *sledged*.

63. **Jump** = exactly. This use of the adverb corresponds with S.'s use of the verb, and is most easily explained by it.

66. **In the gross**, in the general, as opposed to the *particular*, view of affairs. — **Scope**, general view.

67. **Bodes**, foretells.

70. **Toils**, used as a trans. verb.

71. **Cast** = casting.

72. **Mart**, marketing or buying. (*Mart* is a compressed form of *market*.)

73. **Impress** = impressment.

75. **Toward**, in preparation, at hand, coming on.

81. **Pricked on**, spurred on. — **Emulate** = emulous. The only instance of the word in S.

82. **The combat**. *The* is employed *par excellence*. *The combat* = the (mortal) combat which puts an end to discussion.

85. **Law and heraldry** = heraldic law. A hendiadys.

86. **With his life**, in the event of his being killed. — **Those his lands**, in legal language.

87. **Seized of** = possessed of — another legal term.

88. **Moiety**, from Late Lat. *medietas*, half; but frequently used by S. in the sense of a portion.

89. **Gagèd**, pledged or deposited as an equivalent to the lands of Fortinbras. *Gage* is a doublet of *wage*; and the French have *gages* for *wages*.

92. **Carriage of the article designed**, tenor of the clause drawn up. For a very different meaning of *carriage*, see V. ii. 154.

94. **Unimprovèd**, undisciplined, untutored. Chapman uses *improve* for *reprove*.

95. **Skirts**, borders.

96. **Sharked up**, picked up wherever he could find them.
— **List**, muster-roll. — **Resolutes**, desperadoes.

98. **That hath a stomach in't**, that requires courage.

105. **Romage**, bustle, confusion. A form of *rummage*, originally a sea word, meaning 'to set a ship to rights,' or 'to clear the hold of goods.'

106. **Be**. Dr. Abbott (sect. 299) says, '*Be* expresses more doubt than *is* after a verb of thinking.'

107. **Sort**, suit or assort itself with the events going on all round us. — **Portentous**, ominous or full of portents.

109. **Question**, the subject and cause.

110. **A mote**, a small matter as compared with the significance of the things it portends.

111. **Palmy**, victorious. The palm was the badge of victory.

114. **Gibber**, speak inarticulately.

115. **As stars**. It is pretty plain that a line must have dropped out. The speaker must have said something like this: And other terrible things were heard and seen. — **Stars with trains of fire**, comets.

116. **Disasters**. From Gr. *dys*, ill, and *astron*, a star. One of the terms that have come down to us from Astrology. Others are *influence*, *aspect*, *retrograde*, *ascendant*, etc. — **Moist star**, the moon.

118. Sick . . . to doomsday, as sick and ill as if the last day had come. A bold and subtle use of the preposition *to*.

119. Precurse, precursor, forerunner.

120. Harbingers. A *harbinger* was an officer of a royal household sent on in front to prepare *haborage* or lodging for the king.

123. Climature, country or region. The word comes from the Gr. *klima*, a slope—as the temperature depends on the slope of the sun's rays and the angle they make with the ground.

125. Cross it. It was an old belief that any one who crossed the path of a ghost was 'blasted' by it,—that is, made subject to its evil influences.

127. Speak to me. The importance of this adjuration demands a line for itself. The pause, which the emotion necessitates and the physical need of taking breath compels, fills up the full measure of the line, and represents the missing part.

132. Happily. Some commentators translate this as *haply*. Others think it = *luckily*. — Foreknowing = foreknowledge.

134. Uphoarded, hoarded up.

138. Partisan, battle-ax (on long pole) or halbert. From Fr. *pertuisane*, said to be from O. Fr. *pertuiser*, to bore through; N. Fr. *percer*, to pierce.

147. Fearful summons. *Summons* is from Fr. *semonce*; from Lat. *submoneas*—the first word of the law Lat. in which the paper is written.

148. The trumpet = the trumpeter.

149. Lofty, an adverb to sounding, just like *thrill*.

152. Extravagant, in the literal sense of the Latin words *extra vagans*, wandering beyond boundaries; wandering beyond (*extra*) the night boundaries.

153. Confine, place of confinement.

154. **Probation** (four syllables), proof.

156. **'Gainst.** Very often used of time in older English.

160. **Strike**, have a malignant influence. We still have the epithet *moonstruck*.

161. **Takes**, infects or blasts.

162. **Gracious**, full of grace, goodness, and favor.

171. **Loves.** S. and other writers of his time frequently use an abstract noun in the plural number, when the noun relates to several persons.

SCENE 2

1. Coleridge says, 'In the king's speech, observe the set and pedantically antithetic form of the sentences when touching that which galled the heels of conscience—the strain of undignified rhetoric—and yet in what follows concerning the public weal a certain appropriate majesty.'

2. **That.** S. and other writers of his time have *though that, while that, lest that, when that*, etc.; and when it was necessary to repeat the conjunction, they used the *that* merely as a representative. Here, accordingly, *that* stands for *though*.

4. **Brow of woe** = woeful brow. A very common use of *of* in S.

9. **Jointress**, joint possessor. The only instance of the word in S.

10. **Defeated** = disfeatured, disfigured.

11. **Auspicious**, cheerful. — **Dropping** tears.

13. **In equal scale.** Here the formality and antithesis verge closely on the ridiculous. — **Dole**, grief. There are two words with this spelling in English. *Dole*, a share, from *deal*, is a purely English word. *Dole* (*doleful*, *condole*, etc.) is from the O. Fr. *doel*, Fr. *deuil*, from Lat. *dolor*, grief.

14. **To wife.** The Old English idiom. — **Barred**, excluded.

18. **Supposal**, opinion. The only instance of the word in S.

21. **Colleaguèd**, allied. The only instance of the word.

22. **He**, a superfluous pronoun; but the distance of the proper nominative makes its use legitimate. — **Pester**, trouble, bother.

23. **Importing**, purporting, having for import.

24. **With** = in accordance with. — **Bonds**. *Bonds* and *bands* are two forms of the same word, meaning obligation.

29. **Bed-rid**, “A. S. *bed*, a bed, and *ridda*, a knight, a rider.” Earle suggests that it is the participle of *bedrian*, to bewitch.

31. **Gait**, going on with, or procedure in it. *Gait* is said to be a doublet or by-form of *gate*. The original meaning seems to be an opening. (The H. Ger. form is *Gasse*.) The word really comes from *get*, not from *go*. — **In that** = inasmuch as.

33. **Subject**, here a collective noun, as in I. i. 70.

35. **For bearers** = as bearers.

39. **Commend your duty**, be the test which will prove that you have done your duty.

41. **Nothing**, used adverbially, = not at all.

43. **Suit**, request, petition.

45. **Lose your voice** = ask in vain. — **Thou beg**. Note the transition from *you* to *thou*. It marks the increase in the professions of the king towards Laertes.

47. **Native to**, closely related to.

48. **Instrumental to**, fully subservient to. S. often applies the word *instruments* to *persons*. Claudius was probably under great obligations to Polonius — perhaps for securing his election to the throne instead of Hamlet.

50. **Dread my lord**. An inversion common with S. We should say “my dread lord.”

56. Pardon, permission to return.

'I begg'd

His pardon for return'

(= leave to go back).

58. **Slow leave** = slowly given leave. The freedom with which S. plays with adjectives is seen in many phrases. Dr. Schmidt says, 'As the English adjective has no inflection, it was formerly apt to form a looser connection with its substantive than in other languages; and instead of expressing a quality or degree pertaining to the latter, to be employed to limit the extent and sphere of it. Thus a *bloody fire* in *Merry Wives*, V. v., is not a fire that has the quality of being bloody, but, as it were, a blood-fire, a fire in the blood.'

60. **Upon his will** = induced by his desire. S. frequently uses *upon* in this way.—**Hard consent**. See note on line 58.

64. **Cousin** = relative. (The word is a concentrated form of the Lat. *consobrinus* = *consororinus*, a mother's sister's son.) S. uses it in the sense of *nephew*; of *niece*; of *uncle*; of *brother-in-law*; and of *grandchild*.

65. **Kin . . . kind**. The latter word must have been pronounced *kinned*; otherwise the antithesis would have been lost. More than an ordinary kinsman—for he is both stepson and nephew; but not feeling at all friendly. "More than kin to Hamlet in being uncle and father—*twice* kin—but less than kind, because his incestuous marriage is *unnatural*, *out of nature*, or *kind*."

67. **I' the sun**. Another punning reference to his dislike of the too frequent use of the word *son* by his uncle. Some commentators think they see in this a reference to an old English proverb: 'Out of God's blessing into the warm sunne,' which meant, 'Thrust out of house and home into the open air, which is the common property of all men.'

73. **Nature**, the state of being born, or human life.

74. **Ay, madam.** Coleridge remarks, 'Here observe Hamlet's delicacy to his mother, and how the suppression prepares him for the overflow in the next speech, in which his character is more developed, by bringing forward his aversion to externals, and which betrays his habit of brooding over the world within him, coupled with a prodigality of beautiful words, which are the half-embodiments of thought, and are more than thought. Note also Hamlet's silence to the long speech of the king which follows, and his respectful, but general, answer to his mother.'

79. **Suspuration, sighing.** The only instance of the word in S. But he has *suspire* twice.

81. **Havior** the same as *behavior*. The word occurs seven times in S.

83. **Denote . . . truly,** give a true and complete indication of what I feel.

90. **Bound** = was bound.

92. **Obsequious**, in the old and literal sense of *belonging to obsequies, funereal*.

93. **Condolent**, grief. Observe that the king, being in an artificial and self-conscious state of mind all through the play, employs Latin words, a pompous diction, and elaborate phrases. Feeling that *he* was the cause of all this sorrow, it was simply impossible that he should be able to use the simple and natural words that would be fit for the occasion.

95. **Incorrect** (a participle, not a mere adjective), in the literal Latin sense of *uncorrected* or *unsubdued*.

97. **Simple**, foolish, witless.

99. **Any the most.** S. has also the phrases: *One the truest mannered; one the wisest prince*. — **Vulgar**, in its original Latin sense of *common*. So the Bible was translated into the 'vulgar tongue.'

101. **Fault**, offense. — **To** = against.

105. **Till he** = down to him.

107. **Unprevailing** = unavailing. In two passages, S. uses *prevail* in the sense of *avail*.

112. **Impart**. Probably S. meant the object of this verb to be *love*. He forgot his previous construction. — **For** = as for.

113. **School** = university. The University of Wittenberg was founded in 1502. Of course this is a necessary anachronism. 'At that great outburst of devotion to letters and philosophy which accompanied the Reformation, and both created and fostered into almost instant maturity the universities of Northern Europe, it was not only youths who thronged to drink and bathe in the streams of knowledge, but also men of mature age.' — STRACHEY.

114. **Retrograde to our desire**. Another piece of affectation for *contrary to our wish*.

115. **Bend you** (a reflective verb) = be inclined.

124. **Sits smiling to my heart** = sits close to my heart smiling. — **In grace whereof** = and to grace or honor this (consent).

127. **Rouse, full bumper**. (The word is said to come from Danish, *rôs*, a beaker.) In S.'s time the Danes were known as the most intemperate people in Europe. — **Bruit**, report.

132. **Canon**, religious law. — **Self-slaughter**, the pure English phrase for *suicide*.

134. **Uses**, customs.

137. **Merely**, in one of the Latin senses of *mere*, — entirely.

140. **Hyperion**, the god of the sun, a name in Homer for Apollo, the god of poetry, music, medicine, archery, and arts. Warburton says, 'By the Satyr is meant Pan; as by Hyperion, Apollo.'

141. **Might not**, could not. — **Beteem**, permit. The only other place in S. where the word occurs is in *Midsummer*, I. i.

142. **Visit.** Note the omission of the *to*.

147. **Or ere.** *Or* is a doublet or by-form of *ere*. *Or ere* is therefore a tautological phrase, like *an if*.

149. **Niobe**, daughter of Tantalus, king of Lydia. She was proud of her twelve children, and insulted Latona, the mother of Apollo and Diana. Wherefore Apollo slew all her sons; and Diana all her daughters—save Chloris; and Niobe, smitten dumb with sorrow, was changed into a rock, from which tears flow forever.

150. **Discourse of reason**, the power of looking this way and that way, and at length choosing. (From Lat. *dis*, apart, and *curro*, I run.)

155. **Left the flushing** = ceased to produce redness.

158. **Nor it cannot.** In older English negatives supported and intensified each other. The annihilation of each other, as in Milton's *Nor did they not perceive him*, is a Latin usage, and has been imported into our language.

163. **Change** = exchange the name of friend.

163. **Make you** = are you doing? An old English phrase, like the German *Was machen Sie?*

180. **Thrift, thrift.** 'What a blast of sarcasm,' says Coleridge, 'whistles through the consonants of this word.' — **Baked meats.** It was customary to have a great feast at a funeral.

182. **Dearest foe.** The word *dear*, in S., has a wide range of meaning. Besides all its modern meanings, it is frequently used to designate that which touches the heart most closely, whether with pain or with pleasure, with love or with hatred.

193. **Season**, control or moderate. — **Admiration**, wonder.

194. **Attent, attentive.** Only twice found in S. — **May** = can. — **Deliver** = relate.

199. **Dead.** S. has also, *The dead of darkness; the dead of night; the dreadful dead of dark midnight.* — **Vast**,

used as a noun. *Vast* and *waste* are two forms of the same word (from Lat. *vastus*).

201. *Cap-à-pé* = *cap-à-pied*, from head to foot.

205. *Distilled*, melted.

206. *With* = *by*. This was the old use of *with*. The modern meaning was represented by *mid* (the Germans still have *mit*). — *Act* = action, operation.

217. *Its head*. The word *its* (the old neuter of *he* was *hit*; poss. *his*) was hardly naturalized in S.'s time. No instance is found in our version of the Bible, except in Leviticus xxv. 5: 'That which groweth of its own accord' (which was printed in the version of 1611, 'it own accord'); in all other places we find the correct form *his*. In the folio editions of S. the poss. *it* is found fourteen times; *it's*, nine times; and *its*, only once.

218. *As* = as if.

230. *Beaver*, from O. Fr. *bevere* (from Lat. *bibere*), to drink. The movable front or visor of the helmet, which the wearer raises for the purpose of drinking.

235. *Like* = likely. S. has *like enough*; and *most like*.

237. *Tell*, count. This is the oldest meaning of the word. (Cf. *count* and *recount*.) Hence the words *toll*, *teller*, *tale*, etc.

242. *Warrant*, a monosyllable.

244. *Gape*, roar at me.

247. *Tenable*, retained.

253. *Your loves* = Say rather your love

255. *Doubt*, suspect or fear.

SCENE 3

'This scene must be regarded as one of Shakespeare's lyric movements in the play, and the skill with which it is interwoven with the dramatic parts is peculiarly an excellence with our poet. You experience the sensation of a pause without the sense of a stop.' — COLERIDGE.

3. **Convoy, conveyance.** — Is assistant, is at hand, or ready. S. uses the verb *assist* in the sense of *attend* or *be present at* — like Fr. *assister*.

6. **Toy**, a mere fancy, not a deep-rooted passion. — **In blood** = in a high state of health and good spirits. *In blood* is a term of the chase.

7. **Primy nature**, nature in its first spring. The only instance of the word; but S. twice uses *prime* for *spring*.

9. **Suppliance** (with the accent on the second syllable), that which supplies or fills up for the time being.

11. **Crescent**, in the literal sense of the Latin word *creescens*, growing. We still have the phrase, *crescent moon*.

12. **Thews**, muscles and sinews. — **This temple**, the body (see John ii. 21). The use of the word *temple* suggests the employment of the term *service*.

15. **Cautel**, deceit, falseness. Only twice used by S. But he has *cautelous* in *Julius Cæsar*, II. i. 129. — **Besmirch**, stain.

16. **Will** = intentions.

18. **Birth**, rank into which he was born.

21. **Health** = prosperity. (*Health* is the noun from *heal*, a by-form of *hail*. Cogs.: *hale*, (*w*)*hole*, etc.)

23. **Yielding**, used in a passive sense.

30. **Credent**, believing. (Credulous is hardly the meaning.)

32. **Rear, shot, danger** — all military terms.

34. **Chariest**, most careful or scrupulous.

36. **Scapes**, escapes; used in prose by Bacon and others.

37. **Canker** for canker worm.

38. **Buttons . . . disclosed**, buds opened.

40. **Blastments**, blights.

43. **Effect**, import.

45. **Ungracious** = graceless. The *un* destroys the force of the *ous*.

49. **Recks**, attends to. Cogs.: *Reckon*; *reckless*. —

Rede, advice. (H. Ger. *Rath.*) — Fear me not. The *me* is here a dative, and the phrase is = *Fear not for me.*

51. Double. Laertes had already taken leave of his father.

57. *Charácter*, inscribe, engrave.

58. Unproportioned, disproportionate, disorderly, unsuitable to the occasion.

59. Vulgar = too familiar, too easy in making friends or permitting approach. 'Don't make yourself too cheap or common.'

60. And their adoption tried = having been tried.

61. Grapple, strongly bind.

62. Dull thy palm, make thy palm callous. — With entertainment = by entertaining or receiving.

67. Censure, opinion.

69. Expressed in fancy, marked or singular in device.

75. Husbandry, economy.

79. Season, ripen or bring to maturity.

Professor Dowden remarks on the above speech, 'The advice of Polonius is a cento of quotations from Lyly's *Euphues*. Its significance must be looked for less in the matter than in the sententious manner. Polonius has been wise with the little wisdom of worldly prudence. . . . In the shallow lore of life he has been learned. Of true wisdom he never had a gleam. And what S. wishes to signify in this speech is, that wisdom of Polonius's kind consists in a set of maxims; all such wisdom might be set down for the headlines of copy-books, that is to say, his wisdom is not the outflow of a rich or deep nature, but the little accumulated hoard of a long and superficial experience. That is what the sententious manner signifies. And very rightly S. has put into Polonius's mouth the noble lines: —

"To thine own self be true;
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Yes, Polonius has got one great truth among his copy-book maxims, but it comes in as a little bit of hard, unvital wisdom, like the rest: "*Dress well, don't lend or borrow money: to thine own self be true.*" — DOWDEN'S *Shakspeare* — *His Mind and Art*.

81. **Tend** = attend.

88. **Bethought** = thought of or recollected.

91. **Audience**, listening or hearing.

92. **Put on me**, told me.

96. **Give me up the truth**. Polonius generally employs the most formal and official phrases he can find.

99. **Green**, inexperienced. Still used in this sense.

100. **Unsifted**, untried. — **Circumstance**, used as a collective noun.

104. **Tenders** (like banknotes), *promises* to pay.

105. **Sterling**, a broken-down form of *Easterling*. *Sterling* was the name of the English penny — the only legal tender in which payments could be made. *Easterlings* was the popular name in England for German traders from the Hanse Towns; their money was of the purest quality.

110. **Fashion**. Polonius takes the word in its second and lighter sense.

113. **Springes**, snares. — **Woodcocks** were popularly supposed to have no brains, and hence the word became a synonym for a simpleton.

116. **Extinct**, dead as soon as they are born — gone in the very making of them.

117. **A-making**. The *a* is the broken-down form of *an*, a dialectic form of *on*.

120. **Your entreatments** = the invitations you receive.

125. **Brokers**, go-betweens.

126. **Investments**, dress.

127. **Implorators**, solicitors.

128. **For all** = in short. Cf. the phrase, 'once for all.'

130. **Moment for moment's**.

SCENE 4

Coleridge remarks, 'The unimportant conversation with which this scene opens is a proof of S.'s minute knowledge of human nature. It is a well-established fact that, on the brink of any serious enterprise, or event of moment, men almost invariably endeavor to elude the pressure of their own thoughts by turning aside to trivial objects and familiar circumstances. Thus the dialogue on the platform begins with remarks on the coldness of the air, and inquiries — obliquely connected indeed with the expected hour of the visitation, but thrown out in a seeming vacuity of topics, as to the striking of the clock, and so forth. The same desire to escape from the impending thought is carried on in Hamlet's account of, and moralizing on, the Danish custom of wassailing. . . . Besides this, another purpose is answered; for, by thus entangling the attention of the audience in the nice distinctions and parenthetical sentences of this speech of Hamlet's, S. takes them completely by surprise on the appearance of the Ghost, which comes upon them in all the suddenness of its visionary character.'

1. **Shrewdly**, keenly.

2. **Eager**, sharp. From Fr. *aigre*; from Lat. *acer*. Cogs.: *Vinegar*; *acid*.

8. **Wake**, hold a late revel.

9. **Wassail**, a drinking-bout. From O. E. *wæs hail* = *be well! health!* — **Up-spring**, the last, and, accordingly, the wildest dance at the old German *merry-makings*. *Up-spring* is a noun, the object of *reels*.

10. **Rhenish**. The wine produced in the Rheingau — between Bonn and Bingen.

12. **Pledge**, the health pledged or drunk.

18. **Traduced**, slandered. — **Taxed**, censured. Another form of *tax* (by metathesis) is *task*.

19. **Clepe**, call. S. has the word five times; and Milton

has *yclept*.—With *swinish phrase* = by calling us *swine*.

20. **Addition**, title.

21. **At height** = at our best, with all our power.

22. **Attribute** = the reputation attributed to us.

24. **Mole of nature**, inherited blemish.

27. **Some complexion** (a quadrisyllable), natural disposition or 'complexion.' 'There were four, distinguished by the old physicians—the sanguine, the melancholic, the phlegmatic, and the choleric. Men are discredited by some congenital defect, which they can no more cure than they can a mole on their skin, by the overgrowth of some natural temper, which reason cannot control, or by some acquired habit of unmannerliness.' — MOBERLY.

30. **Plausive**, which is to be applauded. The indiscriminate use of active and passive participles and adjectives was common in S.'s time.

32. **Nature's livery or fortune's star**, a defect given (*livré*) by Nature, or a mark got by accident. The *star* might be a mark like a star.

34. **Undergo**, carry.

36. **E'il**. The usual reading is *eale*. There are forty-seven conjectural readings of this famous passage; and it would take many pages to set them forth and to comment upon them. The sense is plain enough. It is, 'The small admixture of evil constantly destroys the substance, which is intrinsically noble, to the shame and disgrace of the substance.'

37. **Ever dout**, always destroy or put out.

The above speech is the first instance in the play of the generalizing spirit—predominance of the intellectual—which is one of the feelings that keep Hamlet from action.

40. **Spirit of health** = a healed, that is, saved spirit.

43. **Questionable**, inviting question.

47. Hearsèd, entombed.

48. Cerements, shroud. From Lat. *cera*, wax. It was a kind of cloth, dipped in wax, and used to wrap the bodies of the dead in.

53. Glimpses = gleams or glimmers (words which are cognate).

54. We ought to be *us*. — Fools of nature = whom nature has made fools of.

55. Disposition, constitution, nature.

65. Set = value.

71. Beetles, leans over. *Beetle-brows* are overhanging brows.

73. Deprive your sovereignty of reason. Take away the sovereignty or government of your reason.

75. Toys, freaks, fancies of a desperate character.

82. Artery, nerve, and sinew were used interchangeably in S.'s time.

83. Nèmean. The accent is usually on the second syllable. *Nemea* was the name of a rock in Argolis (in the Peloponnesus), near which Hercules slew a great lion. — Nerve, muscle.

85. Lets me = hinders me. Cf. the phrase, *without let or hindrance*. (There are two words *let* in English. *Let*, to allow, is from O. E. *lætan*; and is the L. Ger. form of the H. Ger. *lassen*. *Let*, to hinder, is from O. E. *læt*, slow, and is connected with *late*, *lazy*.)

89. Have after = let us after him.

91. It, the issue.

SCENE 5

11. To fast. 'And moreover the misese of helle shal be in defaute of mete and drink.' — CHAUCER.

20. Porpentine, the form always used by S. One writer of the eighteenth century has *porcupine*.

21. **Eternal blazon**, revelation of the mysteries of eternity.

33. **Lethe wharf**, Lethe's banks. In *Antony*, II. ii., the banks of the Nile are called 'the adjacent wharf.' — **Lethe**, the river of forgetfulness in Hades.

35. **Orchard**. *Orchard* and *garden* were synonymous.

37. **Process**, account.

38. **Rankly**, grossly.

40. **Prophetic soul**. See I. ii. 254, where Hamlet says, 'I doubt some foul-play.'

62. **Hebenon**, henbane.

63. It was a belief even among medical men in S.'s time that poison could be thus introduced into the system.

68. **Posset**, coagulate. A posset was a drink composed of hot milk, curdled by some strong infusion, and taken before going to bed.

69. **Eager**, sour.

71. **Instant**, instantaneous. — **Tetter**, scab, scurf. — **Barked about**, grew like bark around.

72. **Lazar** = leper. The name came from Lazarus (see Luke xvi.). Hence *Lazaretto*, a house for lepers; then any hospital.

75. **Dispatched**, a case of zeugma. It was the word *life* that suggested *dispatched*; and then it was easily joined to the others. This is the only instance in S. of *dispatch* being followed by *of*. But the *of* is = *from*.

77. **Unhouseled**. *Housel* was an O. E. word for *offering* or *sacrifice*. The word here is = without the eucharist. — **Disappointed**, without the right appointments or preparations. — **Unaneled**, without having received extreme unction. To *anele* (O. E. *anoilen*) was to *anoint with oil* or *ele*.

81. **Nature** = natural feeling.

88. **Fare thee well**. This *thee* — for *thou* — is to be explained, says Dr. Abbott, 'by euphonic reasons.'

89. *Matin*, morning.

90. *Uneffectual*. Either shining without heat or lost in the light of the morning.

97. This distracted globe, his head — which Hamlet is clasping tight with both hands.

98. *Table* = tablet. So *tabled* in S. means *set down in writing*; and *table-book* = *memorandum-book*.

100. *Saws*, sayings. The guttural in the O. E. *seggan* vanished into a *y* in *say*, and into a *w* in *saw*. — *Pressures* = impressions.

107. *Tables*. Memorandum-book. This slight action may relieve Hamlet's overwrought feelings.

108. *One may smile*. The old habit of making generalizations and entering them in his notes is too much for Hamlet; and even at this tragic crisis of his life it overcomes him.

115. *Illo*. The cry used by a falconer to recall his hawk.

124. *Arrant*, thorough-going.

127. *Circumstance*, ceremony or circumlocution.

138. *Honest ghost*. Truly his father's ghost, and not the devil, as Horatio had feared.

147. *Upon my sword*. The hilt of the sword being in the form of a cross. Swearing by the sword was also an old Scandinavian custom.

150. *Truepenny*, honest fellow.

152. *Propose*, speak before us.

156. *Hic et ubique*, here and everywhere.

165. *Give it welcome*. Receive it without doubt or question. Cl. P. S.

167. *Your*, unaccented, and used 'colloquially,' like the Lat. *iste*.

172. *Antic*, odd, fantastic. *Antic* is a doublet of *antique*.

174. *Encumbered*, folded.

176. *An if*, a tautological phrase — like *or ere*.

178. *Giving out*, assertion.

180. **Most** = greatest.

186. **Friending** = friendliness.

187. **Shall not lack** = shall not be lacking.

ACT SECOND

SCENE 1

The following scene admits us to the secret of the character of Læertes, who is intended by S. as a foil to Hamlet. Læertes takes the word just as he finds it, and has no lofty aims or habits of meditation.

7. **Inquire me**, a dative, often called by grammarians the *dativus ethicus*. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. ii. 268: 'He plucked me ope his doublet. — **Danskens**, Danes. The *sk* is the Northern form of the softer English (which used to be *Englise*) *ish*.

8. **Keep**, live. In Cambridge, England, the phrase, 'Where do you keep?' is used for, 'Where do you lodge?'

11. **Come you** = you are sure to come. — **More nearer**. S. frequently uses both (1) the double comparative and (2) the double superlative.

13. **Take you** = assume.

19. **Put on him** = lay to his charge.

20. **Rank**, gross or serious.

22. **Slips**, slight offenses.

23. **Noted**, generally remarked.

31. **Breathe**, speak. — **Quaintly**, adroitly.

34. **Unreclaimed**, untamed.

35. **Of general assault**, such as generally assail youth.

38. **Fetch of warrant**. This may either mean a warrantable or justifiable contrivance, or a device which has been found to be effective.

42. **Him for he whom**. The *he* is 'attracted' into the objective by the *whom* understood.

43. **Prenominate**, aforesaid.

45. Closes with you in this consequence, agrees with you in this conclusion.

51. Leave = leave off.

61. Of wisdom and of reach = wise and shrewd. *Men of reach* means *far-sighted people*. Cf. Mr. Burke's (and Lord Beaconsfield's) phrase, *men of light and leading*.

62. Windlases, winding and roundabout ways. *To fetch a windlasse* and *to fetch a compass* were phrases in S.'s time for *to go round about* — **Assays**, essays or trials. — **Of bias**, a metaphor taken from the game of bowls, in which the player does not send his bowl in a straight line, but trusts to the *bias* to bring it round to the required point.

63. Indirections = indirect methods.

65. Have me = understand me.

66. God b' wi' you. The phrase 'God be with you,' now abbreviated to 'good-by.'

75. Unbraced, unfastened.

77. Down-gyvéð, sunk down to his ankles, where they looked like gyves or fetters. ('The exclusion from Ophelia's presence had been like the first knock of fate at the door of Hamlet's soul. He is claimed for his task.' — MOBERLY.)

79. Purpórt, meaning.

88. As = as if.

89. Shaking of. The full construction was *a-shaking of*.

92. Bulk, body.

99. Ecstasy, madness.

100. Whose violent property = the property of the violence of which. — **Fordoes**, undoes, destroys.

106. Repel, send back.

109. Quoted, marked, noted.

110. Beshrew, a very mild form of imprecation. — **Jealousy**, suspicion.

111. Proper, in the sense of the Lat. *proprium* = a distinguishing mark, appropriate.

112. Cast beyond ourselves, overreach ourselves — are too shrewd and cunning.

116. More grief to hide. If we hid this, it would cause more grief and annoyance (to the king) than it would cause hatred in him if we tell him that Hamlet is in love with you.

SCENE 2

'In this admirable scene, Polonius, who is throughout the skeleton of his former skill in statecraft, hunts the trail of policy at a dead scent, supplied by the weak fever smell in his own nostrils.' — COLERIDGE.

2. Moreover that, over and above the fact that.

6. Since. Another reading is *sith*. *Since* is a contraction of *sithennes*, the genitive of *sithen* or *sith*. In the sixteenth century, *sith* was used of logical progression; *since*, of progression in time.

11. Of so young days = from so early a time.

12. Neighbored to, closely associated with.

13. That, repeated and redundant. — Vouchsafe your rest = be good enough to reside.

22. Gentry, courtesy. Only in this play used in this sense.

23. Expend. The short form is *spend*. Cf. *example* and *sample*.

24. Supply and profit = aid and furtherance.

25. Visitation = visit.

27. Of us = over us.

30. Bent, inclination.

42. Still = always.

52. Fruit, the dessert.

56. Doubt, suspect. — The main (cause).

60. Desires, good wishes.

61. Upon our first audience or opening of our business.

64. Truly modifies *was*, not *found*.

67. Borne in hand, played with and deceived. Cf. Ben Jonson's *Widow*, ii. 1: 'You have borne me in hand this three months, and now fobbed me.'

71. Assay, trial, proof.

79. Regards of safety and allowance, such conditions as are safe and allowable.

81. More considered time = time for more consideration.

83. Well-took. S. has also *drove* for *driven*; *smote* for *smitten*; *mistook* for *mistaken*, etc.

86. Expostulate, discuss fully.

90. Wit, wisdom.

104. The remainder (is) thus. — Perpend, consider or weigh. This use of learned Latin words — like *expostulate*, *perpend*, etc. — is noticeable in the style of Polonius.

108. Gather, and surmise, collect the data together and guess.

116-119. Doubt. In the first and second lines, *doubt* means *be doubtful about*; in the third, *suspect*; in the fourth, *disbelieve*.

121. Reckon, express in numbered verse.

124. Whilst this machine is to him, so long as this body belongs to him. S.'s age was infected by this straining after effect, which Lyly's *Euphues* had made fashionable, and which was called *Euphuism*.

126. More above = moreover.

136. Had played the . . . table-book, had simply noted it down as if in my tables or memorandum-book, and let it go no further.

137. Given my heart a winking, had connived at the whole thing.

139. Might = would you have been able. — Round, roundly, without ceremony.

140. Bespeak, address.

141. Out of thy star = out of thy sphere.

145. Took the fruits of, profited by.

148. Watch, wakefulness, *insomnia*.

149. Lightness = light headedness.

151. All we = we all. Cf. Mark xii. 44: 'All they did cast in of their abundance.' Polonius's description of the stages of Hamlet's illness is very comic. He had in fact seen nothing; it was Ophelia, induced by Laertes, who told him.

159. Center of the earth.

163. Arras, the tapestry hung on the walls. A person might hide between the wall and it without being discovered. Great use is made of this in III. iv. (*Arras* is a town in the north of France, and gives its name to the hangings. Cf. *bayonet*, from *Bayonne*; *pistol*, from *Pistoja*; *currant*, from *Corinth*, etc.)

164. Encounter, manner of address.

168. Wretch, sometimes used as a term of endearment, mingled with pity.

170. Board, accost. When Polonius is not pedantic, he is coarse. — Presently, immediately.

172. God-'a-mercy = God have mercy.

174. Excellent for *excellently*.

181. For . . . carrion. It has been supposed that Hamlet reads this out of his book.

190. Matter. Hamlet purposely misunderstands Polonius's meaning of the word.

195. Purging, discharging.

207. Pregnant, full of meaning. — Happiness, felicity of phrase.

225. Indifferent, middling, average.

234. Doomsday, the Day of Judgment. (*Doom* is connected with *deem*, and with *dom* in *kingdom*, etc., and *dempster*, the old word for a judge.)

242. Confines, places of confinement.

259. Then are our beggars bodies; for our beggars have no ambition, and are thus the only solid and substantial existences.

260. Outstretched, strained, hyperbolical.

261. Fay; from O. Fr. *fei*, faith.

266. Most dreadfully attended by my own wretched thoughts. But Mr. Hunter thinks that 'Hamlet alludes to the annoyance of his being watched and observed so much.'

267. Beaten, usually trod, familiar, usual.

276. But to the purpose. For, if they did speak to the purpose, they must tell the truth.

284. Consonancy, agreement in age. This word is only twice used by S.

285. A better proposer, a more skillful speaker. — Even, plain, honest. — Direct, straightforward. ('A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.')

289. Of you = on you.

293. Prevent, anticipate, and so enable you to keep faith with those who have invited you. And the Prayer-Book has, 'Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings' (where *prevent* has the literal Latin sense of *go before*).

294. Moults, drop. The O. E. was *mouten*; and the *l* is inorganic, as the word comes from Lat. *mutāre*, to change. The place where hawks were kept was called *mews*—from the same root.

295. Forgone, given up. (Usually, but erroneously, written *foregone*. The *for* is the negative prefix, as in *forget*, *forgo*, *forgive*, etc.)

299. Brave, beautiful, grand.

300. Fretted, adorned. There were in O. E. two verbs *fret*—the one (1), *fretan*, to eat (H. Ger. *fressen*, said of animals); the other (2), *frætwan*, to adorn. For (1), see Chaucer, The Knight's Tale: 'The sowe freten the child right in the cradel.' For (2), *Piers Plowman*, ii. 11: 'Alle hir five fynGRES were fretted with rYNGES.'

304. **Express**, expressive, or full of expression.

306. **Paragon**, the peerless one, or highest pattern. From two Spanish prepositions, *wara con* = in comparison with.

307. **Quintessence**, the fifth or highest essence of the alchemists — the essence which remained after the four 'elements,' earth, air, fire, and water, had been removed from the substance.

314. **Lenten**, meager, poor. During Lent players were not allowed to perform in London.

315. **Coted**, came up with and passed. It was a term in hunting.

317. **He that plays the king**. Hamlet here for the first time has a vague forecast in his mind of the plan he is going to form.

320. **Humorous** = full of humors and whims.

322. **Lungs tickle o' the sere**, lungs easily moved to laughter. The *sere* (now spelled *sear*) is the catch in a gun-lock which holds the hammer till it is released by the trigger. If this part of the lock be so made, or if it is much worn, the sear (or grip) may be so *tickle*, or ticklish, that a slight touch may displace it, and the gun goes off. The general idea here is of persons so prone to laughter that a touch of wit will start them. — **The Lady** shall mar the measure rather than not express herself freely.

326. **The City**, Copenhagen. Elsinore is the place at present.

327. **Residence** = remaining in the city.

329. **Inhibition**, prohibition to act. This may refer to the limiting of public performances in 1600 and 1601 to the two theaters called *The Globe* and *The Fortune*. — **Innovation**. 'the insurrection of Essex.'

336. **Aery** (incorrectly spelled *eyry*), an eagle's nest; a brood of eagles or hawks. From Low Lat. *area*, a nest of a bird of prey; perhaps from Icelandic *ari*, an eagle.

Professor Skeat says, in his *Etymological Dictionary*, 'When fairly imported into English, the word was ingeniously connected with Middle English, *ey*, an egg, as if the word meant an *eggery*; hence it came to be spelled *eyrie* or *eyry*, and to be misinterpreted accordingly. — **Eyases**, nestlings, unfledged birds.

337. **Cry out on the top of question**, at the top of their voices. *Question* here = speech. — **Tyrannically**, so as to put down all different expressions of opinion.

340. **Wearing rapiers**, grown-up people. — **Goose-quills**, those little eyases. The allusion here is to the boys of the chapel Royal, etc., whose performing of plays was fashionable when this play was written.

343. **Escoted**, paid. A French word. (Cogs.: *Shot*; *scot-free*.)

344. **Quality**, profession.

346. **Common players**, players on the 'common (or *public*) stages.'

348. **Exclaim against their own succession**. The men who write for them *now* wrong them, by making them exclaim against what they are themselves afterwards to be.

349. **Much to-do** = much ado.

350. **Tarre**, egg on.

352. **Argument**, the plot of the play. The heading of each of the books of *Paradise Lost* is called *The Argument*.

357. **Carry it away**, carry off the palm.

358. **Hercules**. They carry all the world before them. There is allusion to the sign of the Globe Theater — which was Hercules carrying the round earth.

360. **Mine uncle is king**. Hamlet gives this as another instance of the facility with which honors are conferred on new claimants.

361. **Make mows**, make grimaces.

363. **Picture in little** = miniature.

368. **Appurtenance**, that which properly belongs or appertains to.

369. **Comply with you in this garb**, show you ceremonious courtesy in this way. — **Extent**, extending of courtesy.

371. **Show fairly outward**, have an attractive appearance.

376. **Handsaw**, an abbreviation of *hernsaw*, or *heronshaw*, a dialectic form of *heron*. Hamlet alludes to the sport of hawking. If a heron is started, he would probably fly with the wind; if the wind is N.N.W., he would fly to the south; and the rays of the sun would make it difficult to distinguish the hawk from the heron. If the wind were south, the heron would fly north; and, as the sun would be at the back of the sportsman, it would be easy to distinguish both birds. Hamlet means that he is only partially mad. Cl. P. S.

377. **Well** = good.

381. **Happily** for *haply*.

384. **You say right**. This is said to keep Polonius from fancying they have been talking about him.

388. **Roscius**, a great actor at Rome, in 70 B.C. He taught Cicero to speak. Good actors were proverbially called *Rosci*.

390. **Buz, buz**. Blackstone says, '*Buz* used to be an interjection at Oxford when any one began a story that was generally known before.'

392. **Then came** — probably a line from an old ballad.

396. **Scene individable**, a play in which the *unity of place* is strictly adhered to. The Greek tragedy has no division into scenes, the scene remaining the same or undivided throughout the play. In the Gothic drama, or poem unlimited, the changes of scene were without definite limits. — **Poem unlimited**, a play in which neither the unity of place nor that of time is observed. — **Seneca**, the author

of several tragedies in Latin — one of three persons who bear the name.

397. **Plautus**, a Roman play-writer, twenty of whose plays are still extant.

398. **Law of writ and liberty**. For adhering to the text or for extemporizing when need required.

399. **Jephthah**. See Judges xi. and xii. The old song from which Hamlet quotes is to be found in Percy's *Reliques*.

409. **Follows**. The two senses of coming after and of following, as a conclusion, are played upon.

415. **Row**, stanza. — **Chanson**, song — but used affectedly, in ridicule of Polonius.

416. **Abridgment**, used in two senses, that which cuts one short, and a pastime — dramatic performance, or other.

419. **Valanced**, fringed with a beard. A *valance* is the higher hangings of a bed.

421. **My young lady**. In the time of S. female parts were played by boys or young men.

423. **Chopine**, 'a high cork shoe.' It was really a cork or wooden heel, sometimes from ten to eighteen inches high.

424. **Cracked within the ring**. Douce says, 'There was a ring or circle on the coin, within which the sovereign's head was placed; if the crack extended from the edge beyond the ring, the coin was rendered unfit for currency.'

426. **French falconers**, who will go at anything from an eagle to a wren — at game or not-game.

428. **Passionate**, full of passion or emotion.

433. **Caviare**, a Russian condiment, made from the sturgeon's roe. Being a new dish, highly seasoned and of peculiar flavor, it was not much relished by the common people, and is therefore used by S. to signify something above the comprehension of the crowd. — **The general**, the public, the 'masses.'

435. In the top of mine, were superior to mine.

436. Modesty, moderation and good taste. — Cunning, skill.

437. No sallets. 'Nothing that gave a relish to the lines as salads do to meat.'

439. Indict, accuse.

441. Handsome than fine. *Handsome* denotes natural beauty; *fine*, that given by conscious art.

443. Thereabout, that part. We still say his *whereabouts*.

446. The Hyrcanian beast, the tiger. Hyrcania was the name of that part of Persia which lies south of the Caspian.

448. The following lines are written in a highly elaborate style, so as to throw them well out from the background of the play, the diction of which is to be taken as that of real life.

450. The ominous horse, the Trojan horse, designed by Ulysses, built of wood and filled with Greek warriors. *Ominous* means here *fatal*.

453. Gules, the heraldic term for *red*. From Lat. *gula*, the mouth — from the color of the open mouth. — Tricked, painted.

455. Impasted = covered over as with a paste. The only instance of the word. — The parching streets = the dry dust of the streets.

458. O'er-sized, covered over as with *size* or glue.

467. Unequal for *unequally*.

470. Ilium, Troy. (Hence the *Story of Troy* is called the *Iliad*.)

474. Milky for *milk-white*.

476. Painted Tyrant. Malone says, 'S. had in his mind the tremendous personages often represented in old tapestry, whose uplifted arms stick in the air, and do nothing.'

477. **Neutral**, taking no part in the contest. — **Matter**, what he had to do.

479. **Against** = before the coming of, on the approach of.

480. **Rack**, the highest and lightest clouds. The heavens must be silent and windless when they stand still.

483. **Region**, the sky or air.

484. **A-work** = to work.

486. **Proof**, power of resistance. — **Eterne**. S. has this form only twice.

487. **Remorse**, pity.

491. **Fellies**, fellowes, the parts of which the ring of the wheel is composed.

496. **Jig**, a facetious ballad.

498. **Mobled**, muffled up. There is a kind of women's cap called a *mob-cap* — 'a full high cap.'

502. **Bisson rheum**, blinding tears.

504. **O'er-teemèd**, that had borne many children.

511. **Instant**, instantaneous.

513. **Milch** = milk-giving; a metaphor for *tearful*.

514. **Passion** = sorrow or compassion.

519. **Bestowed**, lodged.

520. **Abstracts**, epitomes.

525. **Odd's bodikins** (by the body of God), a reference to the wafer in the sacrament.

527. **After** = according to. — **Use them after your own honor**, etc. — the key-note to the character of a gentleman.

534. **Can you play**. The pronoun changes from *thou* to *you*. **You** = You and your company.

547. **Peasant slave**. Most probably serfs — *ascripti glebæ* — still existed in England in S.'s time.

550. **Conceit**, imagination, conception.

551. **Her working** = the working of his soul.

553. **Whole function**, the action of every member of the body.

558. **Cue**, the prompt word; a stage term.

560. **The general ear**, the ear of the public.

561. **Free** from guilt and remorse of conscience.

562. **Amaze**, confound.

564. **Muddy-mettled**, irresolute. — **Rascal**, formerly the name for a lean deer, 'one fit neither to hunt nor to kill.' — **Peak**, literally pine, grow lean; figuratively, as here, play a contemptible part.

565. **John-a-dreams** = John of dreams, or John the Dreamer; a dreamy, idle fellow. Cf. *Jack-a-lantern*. — **Unpregnant**, not quickened with, nor inspired by.

567. **Property** = everything that was *proprium* to him as a king and as a man.

568. **Defeat** = ruin, destruction.

575. **Pigeon-livered**. It was supposed that doves and pigeons owed their gentleness of disposition to the absence of gall. S. has also *lily-livered*, *white-livered*, and *milk-livered*. — **Gall to make oppression bitter**. To make me feel the bitterness of oppression.

577. **The region kites** = the kites of the sky.

579. **Kindless**, opposed to *kindly* in the phrase in the Prayer-Book, 'the kindly fruits of the earth.'

586. **About!** = *To work!*

595. **Tent** = probe. (From Lat. *tentare*, to try.) — **Blench**, start, or flinch.

601. **Abuses**, deceives.

602. **Relative**, conclusive, more to the purpose. The only instance of the adjective in this sense.

ACT THIRD

SCENE 1

1. Drift of Circumstance = course of roundabout inquiry.

3. Grating, irritating.

7. Forward, very ready.

8. Keeps. The nominative must be taken out of *him*.

12. Disposition, mood.

15. Assay him to = try his inclination for.

17. O'er-raught = overtook. *Raught* is the past of *reach* (the *ch* having been at one time a pure guttural).

26. Edge, incitement. *Egg*, to instigate, and *edge* are two forms of the same word.

30. Closely = secretly.

32. Affront = confront, meet. S. has also, *To affront his eye*.

33. Lawful espials, spies with a right to be inquisitive.

41. Wildness, madness.

44. Gracious — spoken to the king.

48. 'Tis too much proved, too frequently experienced.

55. In the mind belongs to *suffer*.

58. Take arms against a sea. A mixed metaphor, or rather two metaphors blended into one.

62. No more = nothing more.

66. The rub, hindrance. A metaphor taken from the game of bowls. Whatever turned the bowl from its course was called a *rub*.

68. Mortal coil = turmoil of this world.

69. Give us pause, compel us to stop. — Respect, consideration.

70. Of so long life. "The consideration that induces us to undergo the calamity of so long life," or "that makes calamity so long-lived."

71. Of time = of the world.

75. **Takes** = puts up with.

76. A legal term for the settlement of an account. *Quietus est*, he is quiet = discharged. The same idea is contained in the word *acquit*, which is from Lat. *quietus*; and in *pay*, from Lat. *pacare*, to bring to peace.

77. **Bodkin**, a small dagger. — **Fardels**, burdens, the older Fr. form of *fardeau*, a pack or bundle.

78. **Grunt**, a strong cognate of *groan*; as *snort* is of *snore*. *Grunt* had not in S.'s time the lower meaning which it now has. — **Weary**, from *wear*.

80. **Bourn**, limit or boundary. The *r* seems to be intrusive and inorganic; and *bourn* is a doublet of *bound*.

81. **Puzzles**, a continuative or frequentative from *pose*.

85. **The native hue**, natural color.

86. **Cast**, tinge, coloring. The only passage where the word is used in this sense. — **Thought**, anxious reflection. S. sometimes uses *thought* for sorrow.

89. **Soft you now**, Hush!

90. **Orisons**, prayers. *Orison* is a doublet, through Fr., of *oration* (from *orare*, to pray). Cf. *benison* and *benediction*.

94. **Remembrances**, souvenirs, mementos.

100. **Their perfume** = the sweet odor of the words.

102. **Wax**, grow.

110. **Commerce**, intercourse.

119. **Relish of it**, have some flavor of it.

122. **Indifferent** = fairly.

126. **At my beck**, ever ready to swarm round me at the smallest suggestion.

141. **Monsters** = monstrosities. Both S. and Milton use *monster* in the literal Latin sense of *monstrum*, something to be pointed at (from *monstrare*, to show).

144. **Your painting**, the *your* here, as in other parts of Hamlet's remarks, refers to women generally, as shown by the plural *yourselves*.

146. **Jig** = walk as if dancing a jig. — **Nickname**, a

corruption of *an ekename*, "an additional name," the *a* having dropped away from the article.

147. **Wantonness . . . ignorance** = You mistake in wanton affectation, and pretend that you do it through ignorance.

155. **Expectancy** = the hope. The only passage where the word is so used. — **Rose** = flower. — **Fair**, used proleptically — because made *fair* by the rose.

156. **Mold of form** = model of beauty (like Lat. *forma*), by whom all endeavored to form themselves.

157. **Of**, by.

160. **Sovereign**, supreme — that ought to be above all. *Sovereign* is a conventional misspelling; on the mistaken notion that it comes from Lat. *regnum*, a kingdom. It comes from Late Lat. *superaneus*; and Milton always spells *sorran* and *sovranty*.

162. **Blown** = in its bloom, in full blow.

163. **Ecstasy**, madness.

168. **On brood**, brooding.

169. **Doubt**, fear. — **Disclose**, 'the technical term for the young birds chipping their shell.'

170. **For to**. Dr. Abbott (sect. 152) says, '*For to* was very common in Early English and A. S., and is not uncommon in the Elizabethan writers. It probably owes its origin to the fact that the prepositional meaning of *to* was gradually weakened as it came to be considered nothing but the sign of the infinitive. Hence, *for* was added to give the notion of motion or purpose.' Cf. Luke vii. 24: 'What went ye out for to see?'

175. **Variable** = various.

176. **Something settled** = somewhat settled, having a tolerably fixed position.

178. **Fashion of himself** = his usual behavior.

186. **Round**, plain spoken.

187. **In the ear** = within hearing.

188. **Find** = find out or detect his secret.

SCENE 2

'This dialogue of Hamlet with the Players is one of the happiest instances of Shakespeare's power of diversifying the scene, while he is carrying on the plot.' — COLERIDGE.

2. **Trippingly.** Hamlet is anxious that there should be no halting or imperfection in the recital of the speech he has written.

3. **I had as lief** = I would as soon. *Lief* is an adj. (O. E. or A. S., *leof*, dear; H. Ger. *lieb*.) — I had is not the indicative, but the subjunctive (cf. H. Ger. *hätte*) = *I would have*; and the older form of the phrase was, *Me were as lief* = It were as dear to me.

8. **Temperance**, moderation.

9. **Robustious**, sturdy and violent. — **Periwig-pated.** In S.'s time, wigs were worn only by actors; and they did not come into general use until the reign of Charles II.

11. **Groundlings**, the hearers (who paid one penny for their standing-room) in the pit, which in S.'s time contained neither floor nor benches.

12. **Capable of nothing**, understand nothing. — **Inexplicable** = unintelligible.

14. **Termagant**, a character in the old mystery-plays — a scolding god of the 'Saracens.' — **Out-herods.** *Herod* was also a favorite, and always a violent character, in the mystery-plays. A stage-direction in one of these old plays was 'Here Erode ragis.'

20. **Modesty**, moderation.

21. **From the purpose** = away from.

25. **Pressure**, impression. — **Come tardy off**, dully and inefficiently represented.

28. **Censure**, judgment.

29. **There be.** Dr. Abbott (sect. 300) says, '*Be* is much more common with the plural than with the singular.'

37. **Indifferently**, fairly well.

42. Barren of wit, opposed to 'fertile' brains (like H. Ger. *geistreich*).

57. Conversation, intercourse with human beings. — Coped, met, had to do with. (*Cope* is really another form — or doublet — of *chop*, to exchange. Cogs.: *Cheap*, a market; *chap*; *chapman*; *Chipping Norton*; *Copenhagen*; *Kippen*; *Chippenham*; H. Ger. *Kaufen*.)

62. Candied, sugared, flattering.

63. Crook. The nominative to *crook* is *tongue* — a violent case of mixed metaphor. — Pregnant = ready to bow.

64. Thrift (from *thrive*), gain or success.

66. Of men distinguish. S. has also *distinguish of colors*.

71. Blood and judgment = emotions and intellect, passion and reason.

72. Pipe. Hamlet uses the same metaphor in line 351.

76. Something too much. This single sentence, the self-restraint of it, and the thoughtfulness, moderation, and sanity of this whole speech, utterly upset all the theories about Hamlet's so-called 'madness.'

80. A-foot, going on.

81. With the very comment, with the most intimate and real intuition of thy mind.

82. Occulted, carefully concealed. The only instance of the word.

83. Unkennel itself, come out of its hole. (*Kennel* is from Low Lat. *canile*, a place for dogs; just as *ovile* came from *ovis*, a sheep.)

86. Stithy, smithy. The *stithy* is the place where the *stith* or anvil stands. It is a cognate of *stead* (in *bedstead*), *steady*, etc. — Heedful note, notice full of heed or care.

89. In censure of his seeming, in forming an opinion of his appearance.

91. Pay the theft = pay for what is stolen.

92. Idle, perhaps light-headed (again) — so as to throw them off the scent. Shakespeare uses the word so.

94. **Fares** = is. Cf. the phrases: *How fares the king? fare you well; how well she fares.* But Hamlet intentionally misunderstands it in the sense of *feeds*.

95. **The Chameleon** was supposed to live on air.

98. **Have nothing with this answer** = this is no answer.

101. **In the university.** The practice of acting Latin plays in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge is very ancient, and continued to nearly the middle of the 18th century.

105. **Julius Cæsar.** A Latin play on this subject was acted at Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1582. — I' the **Capitol.** But Cæsar was not killed there; it was in the Council-house of Pompey (*Curia Pompeii*) that he fell.

109. **Stay upon** = await.

119. **Within's** = within this.

123. **Sables.** Warburton read, 'Fore I'll have a suit of sable.' Johnson observed that the fur of sables is not black; a suit trimmed with sables was magnificent, and not a mourning garment. Hudson adopts a suggestion of Wightwick, and reads *sabell*, flame-color. But Hamlet's jest lies in the ambiguity of the word; sables, the fur, and sable, the black of heraldry. See IV. vii. 81, whence it appears that sables were the livery of "settled age." "What an age since my father died! I am quite an old gentleman!" — with an ambiguity of apparent self-contradiction in Hamlet's manner, on the meaning, *black* — "I mean to be rich and comfortable; and the devil must be the only personage who always wears black, his accustomed garb." — DOWDEN.

127. **Not thinking on**, being forgotten. — **The hobby-horse**, a figure in the old May-day games and Morrice-dances, which were put down by the Puritans. The man's legs went through the body of the horse, enabling him to walk, but covered by a long boot-cloth. False legs were attached to the saddle.

131. **Miching Mallecho**, secret, sneaking mischief. *Malhecho* (Spanish) = an evil action. (From Lat. *male*, ill, and *factum*, done. The Lat. *f* becomes in Spanish *h*, as in *filius* and *hijo*.)

133. **Belike**, probably, or I suppose. — **Argument**, plot.

143. **Posy**, motto.

146. **Phœbus' cart** = the sun. 'The style of the interlude here is distinguished from the real dialogue by rhyme, as in the first interview with the players, by epic verse.' — COLERIDGE.

147. **Salt wash** = the sea. — **Tellus**, the Earth (personified).

148. **Sheen**, light. It is the noun from *shine*. S. has also *starlight sheen*.

151. **Commutual**, a strong form of *mutual*.

154. **Woe is me**. The dative.

155. **Cheer** = cheerfulness.

156. **Distrust you** = fear for you.

158. **Holds**, the old Northern plural. There were, in English, down to the fourteenth century, three ways of making the plural: Northern, in *es*, as *we hopes*; Midland, in *en*, *we hopen*; Southern, in *th*, *we hopeth*. Of these, the first two survived to S.'s time; and even the last is found in *doth* and *hath*. — **Holds quantity** = are in exact proportion.

159. **In neither aught** = nothing in either. — **In extremity** = in extreme measure.

162. **Littlest**. *Gooder*, *goodest*; *badder* and *baddest*, are found in Elizabethan writers.

165. **Operant**, operative, active. — **Leave** for *leave off*. — **To do** = to perform.

172. **Wormwood**, for the king.

173. **Instances**, inducements. — **Move**, form the motive for.

174. Respects of thrift, consideration of economy.

176. Break, pronounced *breek*. In Lancashire people still say *breekfast*.

177. The slave to memory. We keep our purpose only so long as we remember it.

178. Validity, strength, worth.

180. Fall unshaken = falls without shaking. The construction suddenly changes, influenced probably by the collective noun *fruit*.

182. To ourselves, alone.

186. Enactures, resolutions.

187. The disposition that is capable of the highest joy is also most cast down by grief.

190. Our loves = our lovers or friends.

198. Seasons. The 'trial' of the hollow friend brings his hidden hostility to ripeness.

207. Desperation, despair.

208. An anchor's cheer, an anchorite's or hermit's fare. *Ancor* is the O. E. form. The word is from Gr. *anachoretēs*, one who has separated himself from others. — My scope, the utmost limit of my enjoyment.

209. Opposite, contrary thing. In S. it generally means *opponent*. — Blanks, blanches or pales. The only instance of the verb.

221. Is there no offence in't? But the king had seen the 'dumb show,' and must have known the plot of the play to be acted. Halliwell supposes that 'the king and the queen may have been directed to whisper confidentially to each other during the dumb show, and so escape the sight of it.'

226. Tropically, metaphorically. A *trope* is a *turning* of a word from one use to another; a *tropic* is a *turning-line*, from which the sun appears to begin to go back. From Gr. *trepō*, I turn.

227. Image, representation.

228. **Duke.** This seems to be an oversight, as elsewhere he is called king.

231. **Our withers are unwrung**, our shoulders are free from pain.

234. **A chorus**, which explained or commented on the action of the play in Greek tragedies.

235. **Interpret.** The interpreter at a puppet-show sat on the stage and explained the proceedings to the audience.

239. '**The croaking raven.**' A quotation from an old play.

242. **Confederate season**, the time being in conspiracy with the murderer.

246. **Wholesome**, healthy. (The *w* in *whole* is inorganic, as it comes from *heal*.) — **Usurp.** The nominatives are *magic* and *property*.

252. **False fire**, blank cartridge.

261. **Feathers** were much worn on the stage in the time of S.

262. **Turn Turk** = turn completely round for the worse, as from a Christian to a Mussulman.

263. **Provincial** from Provence, a province of France, famous for roses. The roses were rosettes of ribbon. — **Razed**, slashed.

264. **Cry**, company. Generally applied to a *pack of hounds*.

265. **Half a share.** The actors in S.'s time had not annual salaries, but shares, a share, or part of a share in the profit.

267. **Damon.** Hamlet here gives the name of *Damon* to Horatio—an allusion to the old classical story of the close friends, Damon and Pythias.

270. **Pajock** = (he avoids the word *ass*) peacock, probably corrupt for *patchock*, a clown.

273. **Pound**, the O. E. plural as in *stone*, *deer*, *fish*, *year*, *winter*, *summer*, which had no mark for the plural number.

278. **Recorders**, a kind of flageolet.

280. **Perdy**, a corruption of the French *par Dieu*.

286. **Distempered**, discomposed.

287. **With drink**. Hamlet intentionally misunderstands.

288. **Choler**, anger. From Gr. *cholos*, the bile.

291. **Purgation**, in both the legal and the medical sense of the word.

294. **My affair** = the business I bring before you.

295. **Pronounce**, speak out.

301. **Wholesome**, sane, sensible.

302. **Pardon**, leave to go.

312. **Admiration**, wonder.

316. **Closet**, chamber.

319. **Trade**, business. Hamlet purposely selects the lower word.

321. **So**, with a double sense—in the same way, just as much as I ever did.—**Pickers and stealers**, hands, which the Church Catechism warns must be kept ‘from picking and stealing.’

322. **Your cause of** = the cause of your.

329. The proverb is “**Whylst grass doth grow, oft sterves the seely steede**” (“While grass doth grow, the silly horse he starves.”) — **Something**, somewhat.

331. **To withdraw with you** = to speak a word in private with you.

332. **Go about**, do what you can.—**To recover the wind**, to get to windward, as if I were a deer, and you were stalking me. A hunting term.

333. **Toil**, net. *Toil*, to labor, is an *English* word, connected with *till*; *toil*, a net, is from Fr. *toile*, from Lat. *tela*, a web.

334. **If my duty, etc.** “If my duty makes me too bold, it is because of my love for you and regard for your welfare.”

343. **Ventages**, wind-holes. (From Lat. *ventus*, wind. Cog., *Ventilation*.)

351. **Seem to know**, put on the appearance of knowing.

357. **Fret**, probably used in two senses. *Frets* are stops or small lengths of wire fastened on to serve as guides to the fingers. Hamlet uses the word with a double meaning.

369. **By and by** = at once. The procrastination natural to the human race has given a meaning of *delay* both to this phrase and to *presently*.

370. **To the top of my bent** — probably a metaphor from a bow. To the highest pitch.

381. **Nero**, who murdered his mother, Agrippina.

385. **Shent** (past participle from *shend*. Cf. H. Ger. *Schande*, shame), rebuked.

386. **To give them seals** = to seal or confirm them by acts.

SCENE 3

2. **Range**, have free scope and play.

5. **The terms of our estate**, the condition of our power.

8. **Most holy . . . fear** = it is our duty to feel anxious about.

11. **Single and peculiar life** = private person.

13. **Noyance**, injury.

14. **Weal** (wealth), welfare.

15. **Cease**, decease. The only instance of *cease* as a noun. S. is very fond of using the abstract for the concrete.

16. **Gulf**, whirlpool.

17. **Massy** = massive. S. never has *massive*; nor has Milton.

20. **Mortised**. A mortise is a hole cut in one piece of timber to receive the *tenon* of another piece.

21. **Annexment**. The only instance of the word in S.

22. **Ruin**, the act of falling. The primary sense of Lat. *ruina*.

25. **Fear.** For the object of *fear* see note on line 15.
29. **Process, proceedings.** — **Tax him home,** reprove him soundly.
31. **More audience,** other hearers.
33. **Of vantage,** from an advantageous (concealed) position.
47. **To confront the visage,** to stand face to face with.
49. **Forestallèd,** prevented.
55. **Ambition,** the position I was ambitious to have. Like *offence* in the next line, which is = the advantages gained by it.
57. **Currents . . . hand.** A mixed metaphor.
59. **The wicked prize,** the gain got by wickedness.
61. **There,** emphatic. — **Lies,** in the legal sense.
64. **Rests** = Lat. *Quid restat?* What remains?
68. **Limèd** = caught (as with bird-lime).
69. **Engaged,** entangled.
75. **Would be scanned.** Requires examination.
80. **Grossly,** when in a gross (unshrived) condition. — **Full of bread.** So in Ezekiel xvi. 49, the sin of Sodom is said to have been 'pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness.'
81. **Crimes.** In the general sense of sins. — **Flush,** in the prime, full of vigor.
82. **Audit,** examination of his accounts — the debit and credit sides.
83. **Our circumstance.** *Circumstance* = the details we can run over.
84. **'Tis heavy.** He has a *heavy* reckoning.
85. **To take him** = by taking him.
86. **Passage to the other world.** The bell tolled at the death of a person was called the 'passing-bell.'
88. **Hent, grip.** (The verb *hentan* gives *hand, hunt*, etc.)
95. **This Physic,** 'this forbearance of mine merely puts off the end.'

SCENE 4

1. **Straight** = straightway.
2. **Broad**, too strong or unrestrained.
4. **Heat**, anger. — '**Sconce** for ensconce.
14. **Rood** = the holy rood or cross. A common oath.
21. **Wilt thou do?** There was nothing in Hamlet's words to alarm the queen; it was probably his manner.
34. **Busy**, in the sense it has in *busy-body* — officious.
39. **Proof** = armor of proof. — **Sense** = feeling. So *not sensible of fire* meant *feeling no heat*.
46. **Dicers**, gamblers (with dice).
47. **Contraction**, the marriage-contract.
49. **Glow** with shame.
50. **Solidity** = solid mass of the earth. — **Compound** = composite.
51. **Tristful**, a hybrid, *trist* (from *tristis*, sorrowful) being Lat. and *ful* English. — **As against the doom**, as if doomsday were at hand.
52. **Thought-sick**, sick with misery.
53. The **index** was, in S.'s time, placed at the beginning of the book.
55. **Counterfeit**, generally used by S. as a noun, in the sense of *portrait*. — **Presentment** = representation.
59. **Station**, attitude.
66. **Wholesome** = healthy. Cf. Pharaoh's dream in Genesis xli. 5-7.
68. **Batten**, grow fat; connected with *bet* in *better*; cf. also *boot* = profit, in *bootless*, *to boot*.
70. **Heydey**, frolic and gayety. Only here used as a noun.
71. **Waits upon**, follows.
72. **Sense**. Here meaning *sensation*; in the next line it means *reason*.
74. **Apoplexed**, paralyzed as with a stroke of apoplexy.

The only instance of the verb. — **Would not err.** The *so* of the next line belongs also to *err*.

77. **To serve** = to be of use in a case where the *difference* was so very striking.

78. **Cozened**, cheated. Said to come from *coz* — the contraction of *cousin* — hence = to treat a person as a relation for the purpose of advantage. — **Hoodman-blind** = blind-man's-buff.

82. **Mope**, be so dull and stupid.

91. **Grained** = dyed in grain. Originally *grain* (from Lat. *granum*, a seed) was restricted to the dye *kermes*, obtained from the *coccus* insect — a scarlet dye; but it was afterwards applied to any thoroughly fast dye.

92. **Leave their tinct** = give up their color. Now spelled *tint*.

94. **In** = into. Like modern H. Ger., *in* in older English meant *into* as well as *in*.

97. **A vice** = a clown. In the old Morality-plays — which took the place of the older *Mystery-plays* — Vices and Virtues were personified; and the **VICE** took the place of **SATAN**. The modern clown is the representative of the *Vice*.

98. **Cutpurse**. Purses were attached to the girdle, and hung outside — as ladies now carry their pockets.

99. **From a shelf** — like a sneak.

101. **Shreds and patches**, the motley dress of the clown and the *Vice*.

106. **Lapsed in time and passion**, having let time go by and spent force in passion and words.

111. **Amazement**, trouble and distractedness.

113. **Conceit**, imagination. In S., *conceit* means *idea*; *invention*; *mental faculty*; *imagination*; but never has the modern sense.

117. **Incorporal** for *incorporeal*, immaterial.

119. **The alarm**, the call to arms; from Italian *all' armē*.

120. **Bedded, laid flat.** — **Excrements**, excrescences

or outgrowths—like hair and the nails. Used—like so many other words—in its primary sense by S.; from Lat. *ex*, out of, and *crescere*, to grow (cf. *increment*, from *increscere*).

126. Capable of feeling and acting.

128. Stern effects, the effects my sternness must bring about.

134. In his habit as = in the dress he used to wear when alive.

142. Re-word, repeat word for word.

143. Gambol from, skip and run from. — For love = for the love. Dr. Abbott (sect. 89) says, ‘*The* was frequently omitted before a noun already defined by another noun, especially in prepositional phrases.’

150. Compost and *composture*, used by S. for *manure*.

154. Curb and woo = bow and beg. *Curb* is used in its primary sense, from Fr. *courber*, to bend.

159. Assume, not in the modern sense; but in the primary Latin sense of *assumo*—put on, take to yourself (as you would a dress).

160. Sense doth eat, eats away gradually or destroys the original meaning of actions. S. is fond of using *eat* in this sense.

164. Put on. This fully explains the meaning of the word *assume*.

167. Use . . . change . . . nature. ‘Custom is a second nature.’

170. To be blessed by God = when you have repented.

171. For = as for.

174. Their, referring to *heaven*. In several passages, S. regards *heaven* as a plural.

175. Bestow, stow away. — Answer, account for.

181. Bloat, for *bloated*.

182. To ravel . . . out = to unravel.

183. Essentially am not = am not essentially or really.

186. Paddock, toad. From O. E. *padde*, a toad or a frog.

The *-ock* is a diminutive termination (as in *hillock*, etc.).
 —Gib, a tom-cat. From *Gilbert*. The she-cat was called *Graymalkin* — *Malkin* being a diminutive of *Mall* or *Moll* = *Mary*.

187. **Concernings**, concerns.

189-192. It has been conjectured that there existed a story about an ape, who opened a basket containing live pigeons, got into the basket himself, 'tried conclusions' — whether he could fly like them — and so broke his neck.

191. **Conclusions**, experiments.

202. **Enginer**. S. has also the forms *pioner*, *mutiner*, *pulpiter*, etc.

203. **Hoist** for *hoisted*. — **Petar**, petard, a kind of grenade for breaking open gates.

206. **Crafts**. Two secret mines meet.

211. **Toward an end**, a mocking reference to Polonius's old interminable speeches.

Severally = in different directions.

ACT FOURTH

SCENE 1

1. **Profound**, deep. But the other sense of *profound* suggests to S. the word *translate*.

11. **Brainish**, brain-sick, mad.

18. **Kept short**, under control. — **Out of haunt** = away from the company of others.

22. **Divulging**, being divulged.

25. **Ore**, always used by S. in the sense of *a vein of gold*.

26. **Mineral**, a mine.

36. **Speak fair**. Speak gently or kindly.

40. **Untimely** (an adverb), used by S. of *violent death*.

41. **O'er the world's diameter**, to the very ends of the earth.

42. **Blank**, the white mark in the center of the target at which aim was taken.

43. **Shot**. A whisper transporting a shot (which is poisoned) is another instance of mixed metaphor.

SCENE 2

12. **Demanded of**, questioned by.

13. **Replication**, reply or echo.

15. **Countenance**, patronage.

16. **Authorities** = offices of authority.

18. **Mouthed**, put in his mouth. The only instance of the word in this sense.

23. **Sleeps**. S. often uses *sleep* to denote a state of idleness or uselessness.

26. **With the king**. Hamlet probably talks apparent nonsense here as elsewhere to deceive the courtiers. Yet he has some private meaning; perhaps his 'king' refers in one case to his father, and in the other to Claudius.

30. **Of nothing**, of no value. — **Hide fox, and all after!** The signal used by schoolboys in those days for beginning the game of *Hide-and-seek*.

SCENE 3

6. **Scourge**, punishment.

9. **Deliberate pause**, not a sudden measure, but the result of deliberate arrangement.

21. **Politic worms**. Probably one of S.'s plays upon words—an allusion to the German Imperial Diets held at Worms.

24. **Variable** for *various*.

30. **A progress**, a royal state journey.

33. **Send**, for *you cannot go*.

43. **Tender**, have a regard for. — **Dearly**, heartily.

45. **With fiery quickness** = 'in hot haste.'

- 46. At help, ready to assist.
- 47. Tend, attend.
- 56. At foot, close to his steps. Cl. P. S.
- 59. Leans on, depends on.
- 60. At aught = at any price at all.
- 62. Cicatrice; from Lat. *cicatricem*, a scar.
- 63. Free awe, awe spontaneously accorded.
- 64. Set, estimate.
- 65. Process, procedure.
- 66. Cónjuring = adjuring. We frequently find in S. the phrase, 'I do conjure thee.'
- 67. Present, immediate.
- 68. Hectic, fever.

SCENE 4

- 6. Express our duty, give expression to our homage and reverence. — In his eye, in his presence.
- 8. Softly, slowly — an order to his soldiers, not to the captain.
- 9. Powers, forces.
- 14. The main, the whole country.
- 19. Five = but five. — Farm, take it on lease.
- 21. Ranker, richer, greater. — In fee, out and out, with absolute possession.
- 25. Debate = decide. (The literal meaning of *debattre* to beat down thoroughly.)
- 26. Imposthume, internal abscess.
- 33. Market of his time, that for which he *markets* or exchanges his time.
- 35. Large discourse, wide range of discursive inquiry and reasoning.
- 38. Fust, grow fusty or moldy.
- 39. Bestial oblivion, forgetfulness such as one might expect from the lower animals. — Craven, cowardly.

40. **Scruple of thinking**, which consists in thinking. — **Event**, issue, outcome of one's actions.

45. **Gross**, palpable, obvious. 'Hamlet envies every one who has quick and determined resolution, and whose energy does not, like his own, evaporate in meditation, and pass by opportunity after opportunity for action.' — **MOBERLY**.

46. **Charge**, cost.

48. **Puffed**, inspired.

49. **Makes mouths**, mocks. — **Invisible event**, the issue which he cannot see.

50. **Unsure**, insecure.

53. **Argument**, subject (of dispute).

60. **Fantasy and trick of fame**, an imaginary point of honor. A hendiadys.

63. **Continent**, in the primary sense of the Lat. *continentem* = *that which contains*. Cf. *Midsummer*, II. i.; 'They (the rivers) have overborne their continents.'

SCENE 5

Sir Joshua Reynolds says, 'There is no part of the play more pathetic than this scene, which, I suppose, proceeds from the utter insensibility Ophelia has to her own misfortunes. A great sensibility, or none at all, seems to produce the same effect. In the latter, the audience supply what she wants, and with the former they sympathize.'

6. **Spurns**, kicks. — **Enviously**, angrily, spitefully.

8. **Unshapèd**, formless.

9. **Collection**, in the literal Latin sense of *colligo*, I gather (from the stray words she utters) what she means. — **Aim at it**, guess at the meaning.

10. **Botch**, patch, fill in between the gaps.

13. **Nothing sure**, clear, certain, or thoroughly ascertained.

15. Ill-breeding, hatching mischief (*ill* is a noun).
18. Toy, trifle. — Amiss, disaster. (The whole atmosphere of the court is charged with misery, fear, and sense of guilt and wrong.)
19. Artless, unskillful. — Jealousy, suspicion.
20. Spills, destroys.
25. Cockle-hat. The cockle-shell in the hat was the badge of a pilgrim.
26. Shoon, a plural archaic even in S.'s time. Spenser, also archaically, has *treen*.
37. Larded, garnished.
58. Bewept. One of the functions of *be* is to turn intransitive verbs into transitive. Cf. *bemoan*, *bewail*, etc.
41. God 'ield, God yield or reward you.
42. Baker's daughter. There is a story once current in Gloucestershire that our Saviour went into a baker's shop to ask for bread. The mistress was about to give him what he wanted, when her daughter interrupted her with scolding, and for this lack of charity was transformed into an owl.
45. Of this, about this.
50. Valentine. According to an old custom, which lasted into the eighteenth century, the first maid seen by a man on this day was considered his valentine, or true-love, for a year.
64. Remove for removal. — Muddied, thick, etc., referring to the blood — and to the mood of the people.
66. Greenly, foolishly.
67. In hugger-mugger, in secrecy and hurriedly. The only instance of the word in S.
70. As much containing, of as much importance.
72. Keeps himself in clouds, is mysterious and reserved in his conduct.
73. Buzzers, whisperers.
75. Wherein = in which pestilent speeches, necessity (the necessity under which the accuser lies to make good

his charge), having no proper data, will not stick at arraigning even us in every ear.

78. **A murdering-piece**, a cannon loaded with case-shot, a sort of rude *mitrailleuse*.

80. **Switzers**. Swiss Guards served in France, Spain, Italy, and other countries; and, as having no connection with any local faction, could be thoroughly trusted. To this day the Pope's bodyguard consists chiefly of Swiss soldiers.

82. **Overpeering of his list**, looking over (rising above) his boundary or limits.

88. **Of every word**, of everything that is to serve as a watchword to the nation.

93. **Counter**. Hounds *run counter* when they trace the scent backwards, mistaking the course of the game.

109. **Demand his fill**, ask questions to his heart's content.

116. **Thoroughly** = thoroughly.

118. **My will shall stay me**—nothing else.

123. **Swoopstake**. The winner sweeps or draws the whole of the stakes.

127. **Pelican**. It was long supposed that the pelican fed her young on her own blood.

128. **Repast**, feed. The only instance of the word.

131. **Sensibly**, feelingly.

132. **As level**. The metaphor is taken from the custom of point-blank firing.

137. **Virtue**, power. We still have the phrase *by virtue of*.

143. **Fine**, tender.

144. **Instance**, example or specimen. The notion seems to be that Ophelia's wits have gone after her dead father.

154. **The wheel**. She perhaps fancies herself singing to the spinning-wheel.—**The false steward**. This story has not come down to us.

157. **Rosemary** was supposed to strengthen the memory. (To her brother.)

158. Pansies, from the Fr. *pensées*.

160. Document, a lesson. (Used in the primary sense of the Lat. *documentum*, something taught, from *doceo*, I teach.)

162. Fennel (the emblem of flattery) for you, the king. But Longfellow, in the *Goblet of Life*, says:—

‘ Above the lowly plants it towers,
The fennel with its yellow flowers,
And in an earlier age than ours
Was gifted with the wondrous powers
Lost reason to restore.’

163. Rue for you (the Queen). It was also called *herb o’ grace*. It was believed to be good for the eyes.

165. With a difference. The Queen and Ophelia both had need to wear rue, but for different reasons.

166. Violets, the emblem of faithfulness.

169. Thought, anxiety. — Passion, violent sorrow.

170. Favor, charm, attractiveness.

180. God . . . souls. “ This is the common conclusion to many of the ancient monumental inscriptions.” — *Steevens*.

181. Of all = on all.

185. Of whom your = of your wisest friends whom you will.

188. Touched, tainted by any connection with the deed — accessory in any way.

194. His means of death = the means of his death.

195. Hatchment, said to be a corruption of *achievement*. The steps are: *Atchievement* (the heraldic name for *escutcheon* of a deceased person); *atch’ment*; *hatchment*.

196. Ostentation, display. Caldecott says that fashion had appropriated this word to funeral pomp.

198. That = so that.

SCENE 6

8. He shall, sir. The gruff, friendly politeness of the sailor.

11. Let to know, caused to know, informed.

12. Overlooked = looked over. Affixes have in English very different meanings, according as they are separable or inseparable.

13. Means of access to, an introduction.

15. Appointment = equipment.

16. Compelled, involuntary.

19. Thieves of mercy = merciful robbers.

24. Light . . . bore. Metaphor from the *bore* or caliber of a gun; the charge is too light for a gun of such caliber — 'for the caliber of the facts.'

SCENE 7

1. Acquittance for *acquittal*, a form which S. has not.

3. Sith. See note on II. ii. 6.

6. Feats, acts. (*Feat* is a doublet — through N. Fr. — of *fact*, from Lat. *factum*, a deed.)

8. All things else, every other consideration.

9. Mainly, powerfully.

10. Much unsinewed, very weak.

13. Be it either which, be it which of the two ('either') it may.

14. Conjunctive, knit.

16. By her, beside her.

17. Count, trial, account (Lat. *compūtare*, *comp'tare*). *Count* is also spelled *compt* by S.

18. General, common. — Gender, kind or race of men. S. has also, *One gender of herbs*.

20. The spring. The dropping-well at Knaresborough, in Yorkshire, Eng., which incrusts wood, etc., with a calcareous deposit, according to Reed.

21. Gyves to graces, make even his fetters into ornaments.

22. Too slightly timbered, with not a heavy enough body. — Loud, with reference to the shouts and applause of the people.

24. Not where = not gone whither.

27. May go back, if I may praise her for what she was, but is not.

28. Stood challenger, stood forth and challenged. — On mount of all the age, on the summit of the time. Mr. Moberly says, 'The allusion seems to be to the coronation ceremony of the Emperor of Austria as King of Hungary; when, on the Mount of Defiance, at Presburg, he unsheathes the ancient sword of state, and, shaking it towards north, south, east, and west, challenges the four corners of the world to dispute his rights.'

32. Beard he shook with (=by). Danger coming so near us as to, etc.

42. Set naked, landed with all my baggage lost.

47. Should = can possibly.

48. Abuse, piece of deceit, an illusion.

50. Character, handwriting.

53. Lost in it, cannot find my way in it.

57. As how . . . otherwise. 'That we should believe Hamlet returned, or that, with such evidence, we should not believe it, each seems impossible.'

59. So = provided that.

61. Checking at. To *check at* was a term in falconry, applied to a hawk when she leaves her proper game to fly at some other bird. — That, a pronominal particle for *if*.

62. Work him, urge him gradually.

63. Device, scheming.

66. Uncharge, bring no charge against.

69. Organ, instrument. — It falls right. This notion of yours fits into my plan.

72. **Your sum of parts** (= the sum of your parts), the whole of your talents.

75. **Of the unworthiest siege**, of the lowest rank. The siege (or seat) at table denoted the rank.

79. **Weeds, importing**, clothes which indicate. Chaucer often uses *wede* for clothes; and we still have the phrase *widow's weeds*.

80. **Health**, prosperity.

83. **Can well** = have great skill. This absolute use of *can* is found seven times in S.

86. **Incorpsed** for *incorporate*, made one body with.

87. **Topped**, overtopped, surpassed.

88. **In forgery**, even in conceiving or imagining. — **Shapes and tricks**, attitudes and maneuvers.

92. **The brooch** was a jewel worn in the hat, and thus very conspicuous. Cf. Jonson's *Staple of News*, iii. 3, 'who is the very Brooch o' the Bench, gem o' the city.'

94. **Confession**. Delius says that this word implies that Lamond would not willingly acknowledge the superiority of Laertes.

95. **Masterly report** = report of your masterly skill.

96. **In your defense** = in your knowledge of the art of defense.

99. **Scrimers**, fencers. Fr. *escrimeurs*.

101. **Opposed them** = were their opponent.

110. **Love is begun by time**. The fallacy of the king's reasoning lies in the word *by*; if he had said *in*, he would have been right.

111. **Passages of proof**, events which have come within my own experience.

115. **Still** = always.

116. **Plurisy** (a *too-muchness*), from Lat. *plus* (*pluris*), more. (*Pleurisy*, the disease, is an inflammation of the *pleura*, the membrane which covers the lungs.) S. meant to say *plethora*.

117. **Too-much**, an adverb used as a noun. So we say the *why* and the *wherefore*.

121. **A spendthrift sigh**, a sigh that wastes the strength. There was in S.'s time a notion that every sigh cost the loss of a drop of blood from the heart.

122. **Hurts by easing**, injures while it gives relief.

126. **Sanctuarize**, be a sanctuary for.

133. **Remiss**, careless. The word has now an element of blame in it.

134. **Generous**, large-minded, not suspicious. — **Contriving**, plotting (and therefore not likely to suspect plots in others).

135. **Peruse**, examine. Cf. II. i. 87.

137. **Unbated**, unblunted (that is, without the button). S. has *bate*, *abate*, and *rebate* in the sense of *blunt*. — **A pass of practice** = a treacherous lunge.

140. **Uction**, ointment. (The king need not have taken so much time and trouble to get at the wicked side of Laertes; his mind was already well prepared.) — **Mountebank**, a quack-doctor. (From It. *montimbanco*, one who mounts a bench to, etc.)

141. **Mortal**, deadly.

142. **Cataplasm**, poultice.

143. **Simples**. Herbs.

144. **Under the moon**. These herbs had to be gathered by moonlight.

146. **Contagion**, the abstract for the concrete (*poison*). — **That** = so that.

149. **Shape**, the proposed plot.

150. **Drift look through**, purpose appear because of.

152. **Back**, a support in reserve.

153. **Blast in proof** = burst under trial. A metaphor from the testing of a gun.

154. **Cunnings**, the skill of each of you.

157. **As**, for so.

158. **That** represents *when*.

159. **For the nonce**, for the occasion. A corruption of *for then anes* = *ad hoc unum*. The *n* has dropped off, and adhered to the wrong word.

160. **Stuck**, thrust. From It. *stoccata*, a term in fencing.

166. **Aslant a brook**. 'The willow grows on the banks of most of our small streams, particularly the Avon, near Stratford, and from the looseness of the soil the trees partly lose their hold, and bend "aslant" the stream.'

167. **Hoar**, or silvery-gray on the under side; and it is that side which would 'show in the glassy stream.'

169. **Crow-flowers**, the name in S.'s time for the 'Ragged Robin.' — **Purples**, a kind of orchid.

170. **Liberal**, free-spoken.

173. **Sliver**, a branch broken or torn off.

178. **Incapable**, incapable of understanding.

179. **Indued** = endowed with fitting qualities.

187. **Trick**, peculiar habit.

188. **When these are gone**, when my tears are shed, the woman will have departed out of me.

191. **Douts it** = puts it out. *Dout* = *do out*. Cf. *Don* for *do on*; *doff* for *do off*; *dup* for *do up* (or *open*).

ACT FIFTH

SCENE 1

"One other objection let me touch upon here, especially as it has been urged against Hamlet, and that is the introduction of low characters and comic scenes in tragedy. Even Garrick, who had just assisted at the Stratford Jubilee, where Shakespeare had been pronounced divine, was induced by this absurd outcry for the proprieties of the tragic stage to omit the grave-diggers' scene from Hamlet. Leaving apart the fact that Shakespeare would not have been the

4. **Straight** = straightway, at once. — **Crowner**, an old form for *coroner*.

9. **Se offendendo** for *defendendo*.

12. **Argal** for Lat. *ergo*, therefore.

17. **Nil he** = ne will he. *Ne* is the O. E. negative, and was combined with *am* into *nam*; with *is* into *nis*; with *wolde* into *molde* (= would not); with *were* into *nere*, etc.

This speech of the clown is said to be a satire on the case of Sir James Hales (in the time of Elizabeth). Sir James Hales had drowned himself; and the question arose whether his estates were forfeit to the Crown. Much legal subtlety was expended in discovering whether Sir James was the *agent* or the *patient*; who drowned him; and in showing that the living Sir James caused the dead Sir James to die; that the living man only must therefore be punished; but where was the living man? and so on.

23. **Quest** for *inquest*.

29. **Even Christian** = fellow-Christian.

34. **The first**. Adam's spade is mentioned in some books of heraldry as the most ancient form of escutcheon.

53. **Unyoke**, take your rest, your work is done — a farm-servant's phrase.

56. **Mass** = by the mass.

61. **Stoup**, a word still in use in Scotland.

62. **In youth**. The verses that follow are from an old song attributed to Thomas, Lord Vaux, and published in 1557. The *O* and *ah* represent the pants and grunts after a stroke of the mattock.

64. **To contract**, a line without sense — due to the muddle-headedness or to the imperfect memory of the singer.

69. **A property of easiness**, a quality that sits lightly on his mind.

72. **Daintier**, more delicate.

75. **Intil**, into. A form still found in Scotland.

76. **Such** = young.

78. **Jowls**, knocks. We may imagine the clown knocking (jowling) the skull into the earth with his spade.

80. **Politician**, a schemer. S. always uses the word in a bad sense. So *politic* is used in the sense of *artful*.

81. **O'er-reaches**, gets the better of.

90. **Chapless**, jawless. — **Mazard**, head (used in a contemptuous sense).

91. **Revolution**, change of fortune by time. — **The trick** = the knack.

93. **Loggats**, a diminutive of *logs*. A kind of bowls, 'with a difference.'

96. **For and** = and eke.

100. **Quiddits** for *quiddities*, subtleties. *Quidditas* was the scholastic Latin for the essence of a thing. — **Quillets**, from Lat. *quidlibet*, whatever. (Cog. *Quibble*.) Lord Campbell remarks, 'The law terms which follow are all used seemingly with a full knowledge of their import.'

105. **Recognizances**, bonds to acknowledge money lent on land.

106. **Fines**, from Lat. *finis*, an end. (A *fine* in law is a sum of money paid to the lord by the tenant, for permission to transfer his lands to another.)

110. **Pair of indentures**. Indentures were contracts made out in duplicate. Both were written on one sheet of parchment, which was then cut in a zigzag fashion (hence the name *indenture*, from Lat. *dens*, *dent-is*, a tooth). Each party then received one of the two fitting parts; and the fact of their fitting proved the genuineness of the documents. Cf. the idea in *Tally*.

112. **Box**, grave, coffin. (But it is in a *box* that attorneys keep their deeds.) — **Inheritor**, possessor.

118. **Assurance**, perfect security. With a double reference — one to the legal meaning, 'conveyance by deed.'

123. **Thine**. Hamlet uses the *thou* in speaking to the clown; but the clown employs the *you*. *Thou* was in S.'s

time used (1) to friends; and (2) to servants; and (3) in contempt — just like the German *Du*.

128. **Quick**, living. Cf. the phrase, 'The quick and the dead.'

139. **Absolute**, thorough-going in his demands.

140. **By the card**. The card was the circular disk of pasteboard on which the points of the compass were marked. Hence you must not say N.E. if the wind was really N.E. by N. — **Equivocation**, using words in two different senses. (From Lat. *æquus*, equal, and *vox*, a voice or word.)

142. **So picked**, so nice, so precise.

144. **Kibe**, chilblain on the heel.

149. **Hamlet was born**. This would make Hamlet thirty. There have been endless discussions on this subject of Hamlet's age, but no agreement has been reached.

168. **Last you**, the ethical dative. The *your* as in *your philosophy* in I. v. 167. — **Eight year**. In older English, many neuter nouns had no plural ending; and we still have survivals of this in *sheep*, *deer*, *horse*, *pound*, *night* (in *fort-night*), *stone*, etc.

181. **Rhenish**, Rhine wine, 'hock.'

182. **Yorick** may either be a corruption of *Rorick* or of *Yörg*, the Danish for *George*.

189. **It**, all that is left of him.

191. **Gibes**, jeers and jokes.

193. **On a roar**. We still have the phrase, 'set on fire.'

194. **Chapfallen**, in two senses.

196. **Favor**. Complexion, appearance.

208. **Too curiously**, too elaborately, with too much care.

210. **Modesty**, moderation.

218. **Flaw**, blast or gust.

221. **Maimèd**, defective. By the old English law, which continued up to the preceding century, a suicide was buried, without any funeral service, at the meeting of four cross-roads.

223. **Fordo**, undo.—**Estate**, rank.

224. **Couch**, crouch down and hide.

228. **Obsequies**, funeral rites.—**Enlarged**. Some ceremonies were added over and above those to which she was legally entitled.

229. **Warrantise** for *warranty*—another form of which is *guarantee*.

230. **Great command**, of the king.—**Order**, the order set or ordained by the Church.

233. **Shards**, potsherds, fragments of pottery.

234. **Crants**, garland. H. Ger. *Kranz*. Down to the end of the 18th century it was the custom in many country parishes in England to carry a garland of flowers before the coffin of an unmarried young woman.

235. **Bringing home**, to her last home, the notion being that the funeral was to be the counterpart of the procession bringing the bride home to the house of her husband.

238. **Requiem**, a song of rest for the dead. (Acc. of Lat. *requies*, rest.)

240. **Peace-parted** = departed in peace.

250. **Ingenious sense**, quick feeling.

255. **Pelion**, a mountain in Thessaly, near Mount Ossa. To pile 'Pelion upon Ossa' became a proverbial expression for exaggeration in statement.

256. **Blue Olympus**, a high mountain between Thessaly and Macedonia—the abode of the gods.

258. **Conjures** = adjures.—**Wand'ring stars** = the stars in their journey through the heavens.

259. **Wonder-wounded**, wonder-struck, 'struck' with surprise.

263. **Splenitive**. The spleen was supposed to be the seat of anger; as the heart of love, and the liver of revenge.

269. **Wag**, move. In Shakespeare's day *wag* did not have the somewhat comic meaning that it has now.

275. **Forbear him**, leave him alone.

277. *Woo't* = *wouldst thou*. A colloquialism — which indicates his contempt for Laertes.

278. *Eisel*, vinegar. So as to have to make a wry face. Hamlet despises the overwrought grief of Laertes.

280. *Outface*, put me out of countenance.

289. *Golden couplets*. The pigeon generally sits on two eggs; and, when her young are hatched (*disclosed*), they are covered with a yellow (*golden*) down.

297. *To the present push*, to the issue immediately.

299. *Living*. No doubt a hint to Laertes that Hamlet's life was going to be offered up in revenge for the death of Ophelia.

SCENE 2

6. *Mutines*, mutineers.—*Bilboes*, iron stocks used on board ship. From *Bilboa*, in Spain, which was famous from Roman times for the manufacture of iron.—*Rashly*, hastily.

11. *Rough-hew*. *Rough-hewing* comes before the finer work of *shaping*.

13. *Scarfed*, thrown loosely about me, my arms not put through the sleeves.

17. *To unseal* = as to unseal.

18. *Grand*, the official term.

19. *Exact*, carefully detailed.

20. *Several*, separate, different.

21. *Importing*, relating to.

22. *Bugs*, bugbears. (*Cog.*, *Bogy*.)—*In my life*, in the event of my being allowed to live.

23. *Supervise* (a verb for a noun), at sight, on the first reading.—*Bated*, allowed.

29. *Be-netted*, the only instance of the word.

31. *They*, my brains.

33. *Statists*, statesmen.

34. *A baseness*. Blackstone says, 'Most of the great

men of S.'s time, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands: their secretaries, very neat ones.'

36. **Yeoman's service**, faithful service, such as the yeomen or minor freeholders were accustomed to render to England in war.

37. **The effect** = the substance or import.

41. **Wheaten**, to indicate industry and plenty.

42. **Comma**. Dr. Schmidt says that Hamlet's expression is purposely ludicrous. The full stop or period divides; the comma connects.

43. **Charge**, weight. S. also uses *charge* in the sense of *baggage*.

47. **Shriving-time**, time for confession (shrift). The term came afterwards to be synonymous with any short period.

48. **Ordinant**, ruling, arranging. The only instance of the word. A participle formed after the French model, like *marchant*, *couchant*, *rampant*, *regardant*, in heraldry.

50. **Model**, counterpart.

51. **The writ**, what was written.

52. **Subscribed**, signed.

54. **Was sequent**, followed.

57. **Make love to**, were eager for.

59. **Insinuation**, in the primary meaning of the word—winding themselves into the business.

61. **Pass**, thrust.

62. **Opposites**, opponents.

63. **Thinks't thee**. Like *meseems*, *methinks*, *methought*, etc. The *think* in *methinks* comes from *þincan*, to seem, and is always intransitive; the *think* in *I think* is from *þencan*, to think, which is always transitive. — **Stand . . . upon**, is incumbent on me.

66. **My proper** = my own.

68. **Quit him**, pay him off.

69. **Come in further evil**, commit further crimes.

73. 'You never suspect the errand Hamlet is on until you happen to hear that little word, "*the interim is mine!*"' It means more mischief than all the monologues. No threats; no imprecations; no more mention of smiling, damned villain; no more self-accusal; but solely and briefly, "*It will be short; the interim is mine!*"' Then, for the first time, we recognize the extent of the change that has been wrought in Hamlet; then, for the first time, we perfectly comprehend his quiet jesting with the clown, his tranquil musings with Horatio. The man is transformed by a great resolve; his mind is made up. The return of the vessel from England will be the signal for his own execution, and therefore the moral problem is solved; the only chance of saving his life from a lawless murderer is to slay him; it has become an act of self-defense; he can do it with perfect conscience. . . . At the very moment he encounters the clown in the churchyard, he is on his death march to the palace at Elsinore.' — MILES.

79. Bravery, showiness.

83. Water-fly. 'A water-fly skips up and down upon the surface of the water without any apparent purpose or reason, and is thence the emblem of a busy trifler.' — DR. JOHNSON.

87. Crib, manger.

88. Mess, dining table. — Chough, a kind of jackdaw.

89. Spacious, broad-acred.

90. Sweet lord. Osric speaks the euphuistic language so fashionable in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

98. Indifferent cold, rather cold.

100. Complexion, constitution.

106. For mine ease. I feel easier with it off.

108. Absolute, perfect.

109. Differences, distinctions that set him high above other men. — Great showing, elegant appearance.

110. Feelingly, accurately — with a proper feeling of each good quality in him (= to speak him home). —

Card or calendar of gentry. 'The card (see note on V. i. 140) by which a gentleman is to direct his course; the calendar by which he is to choose his time, that what he does may be both excellent and seasonable.' — J.

111. **Gentry**, like Chaucer's *genterie* or *gentelesse*. — **The continent.** The metaphor is taken from a map; and *part* is used in two senses.

113. **His definement** = the definition of him. — **Perdition, loss.**

114. **Inventorially**, as if one were drawing up an inventory.

116. **Yaw** (for *would yaw*), a nautical term for a ship falling away from, and not answering, the helm. (The passage is almost unintelligible, and is probably corrupt.)

117. **Of great article** = of many items and qualities (*articles* are the particulars in an inventory).

118. **His infusion, essence.** — **Dearth** = dearth or high value.

119. **His semblable**, the only thing like him.

120. **Trace, follow** — but also used in the secondary sense of *delineate*. — **Umbrage**, shadow, from Lat. *umbra*.

123. **The concernancy?** What does all this point to?

~126. **In another tongue.** Perhaps this means "Your own language on the tongue of another."

127. **You will do't, you will succeed in understanding, if you try.**

128. **What imports, why has this gentleman been named?**

136. **Much approve me** = be much to my credit.

139. **Compare with** = assume to rival.

142. **Imputation** = that which is imputed to him, reputation.

143. **Laid on him, won for him.** — **By them**, by his weapons. Osric uses *weapon* in a collective sense. — **Meed, merit.**

149. **Imponed, staked.**

151. Assigns, appendages, belongings. — **Hangers**, the straps which attach the sheath to the belt or girdle.

152. Responsive, are in keeping with.

154. Liberal conceit, free and charming design.

157. Must be edified by the **margent**, be compelled to have recourse to the notes — which in old books were printed in the margin. — **Margent** (the only form in S.), margin.

159. **Germane** = appropriate, akin.

170. **Answer**, in the sense of meeting; though Hamlet intentionally takes it in the other sense.

175. **Breathing-time**, time for exercise and a constitutional.

180. **Re-deliver**, report.

187. **Lapwing**. The young lapwing was said to run away with the shell on its head as soon as it was hatched.

189. **Comply** = pay compliments to.

192. **Outward habit**, superficial manner. — **Encounter**, address.

193. **Yesty**, frothy.

194. **Fond**, foolish. — **Winnowed** (from *wind*), separated (the chaff) from the wheat.

195. **Bubbles**. Here the metaphor changes. Osric is like *chaff*, winnowed from the wheat; and like *bubbles*, which rise to the surface of the water.

197. **Commended him** (= himself), sent you his compliments.

203. **Fitness**, convenience.

208. **In happy time**. In good time.

209. **Gentle entertainment**, some courteous talk.

214. **At the odds** = with the odds I have.

215. **How ill all's here**. Coleridge says, 'S. seems to mean all Hamlet's character to be brought together before his final disappearance from the scene: his meditative excess in the grave-digging, his yielding to passion with Laertes, his love for Ophelia blazing out, his tendency to

generalize on all occasions in the dialogues with Horatio, his fine gentlemanly manners with Osric, and his and Laertes's own fondness for presentiment.'

219. **Gain-giving**, misgiving. We have *gainsay*; and we had *gainstrive* and *gainstand*.

221. **Fit**, ready.

225. **The readiness is all**. The same thought occurs in *King Lear*, V. ii. 11.

226. **Has aught**, can take anything with him. — **What is't** = what matters it if we have to?

231. **Presence** = the people present.

234. **Exception**, objection. We have this meaning still in the phrase, *To take exception to*.

235. **Madness**. Hamlet has still, in the king's presence, to keep up the mask of madness—lest he should put the king too much on his guard.

243. **Audience**, like *presence* in line 231.

244. **Disclaiming from** = disavowal of. — **Purposed evil**, intentional harm.

247. **In nature** = so far as my natural feelings are concerned.

248. **Whose motive** = the moving power of which.

249. **In my terms of honor**, so far as (conventional) honor is concerned.

252. **Precedent of peace**, a precedent among affairs of honor which will justify me in making peace.

253. **Ungored**, unhurt.

260. **Stick fiery off**, be set off brilliantly, stand out in brilliant prominence.

268. **Likes me**. *Me* is a dative. — **A** = one.

272. **Quit**, pay him off. — **The third exchange** of thrust and parry.

275. **Union**, a perfect pearl — 'a large solitary pearl not set with other jewels.' (From Lat. *unus*, one.)

278. **Kettle**, kettle-drum.

285. This pearl is thine, and he pours the poison in.

291. Napkin, handkerchief.

302. Wanton of = trifle with me as if you were playing with a child. 'This is a quiet but very significant stroke of delineation. Laertes is not playing his best, and it is the consciousness of what is at the point of his foil that keeps him from doing so; and the effects are perceptible to Hamlet, though he dreams not of the reason.'

305. Incensed, angry.

309. Springe, snare. A writer in *Notes and Queries* says, 'This bird is trained to decoy other birds, and sometimes, while strutting incautiously too near the springe, it becomes itself entangled.'

311. How does the queen? What is the matter with her?

331. Tempered, mixed.

338. Mutes, personages who have no speaking parts in the play.

343. Unsatisfied, not fully informed.

356. O'er-crows, overcomes.

360. Occurrents, things that have occurred, incidents. The only instance of the word.

361. Solicited, prompted (my action). Sentence incomplete.

367. Quarry, dead game. *This quarry* = these slaughtered persons. (There are two words *quarry* in English, (1) from low Lat. *quadrare*, to make square; (2) from O. Fr. *corée*, from Lat. *cor*, the heart, because the heart and entrails were given to the hunting dogs.)—**Cries on havoc**, calls for slaughter and attack with no quarter given, or tells of havoc, etc.

368. Toward, going on.—Eternal. S. seems to use this word as the strongest epithet he knows.

375. His mouth, the king's.

384. Carnal, sensual.

386. Put on, instigated.
 387. Upshot. Conclusion or final issue.
 389. Deliver, recount.
 392. Rights of memory = rights which are remembered.
 395. Will draw on more = will be seconded by others.
 398. On plots = in consequence of plots. — Four captains. This was the custom in the case of a soldier of high rank.
 400. Put on = put to the test, had he become king.
 401. Passage, departure from this life.
 402. Rites of war. Mr. Moberly, excellently — as usual, 'Late and under the strong compulsion of approaching death, he has done, and well done, the inevitable task from which his gentle nature shrank. Why then any further thought, in the awful presence of death, of crimes, conspiracies, vengeance? Think that he has been slain in battle, like his Sea-king forefathers; and let the booming cannon be his mourners.'

EXAMINATION PAPERS

A (FIRST ACT)

1. Give a brief but connected account of the incidents in the First Act.
2. What state of feeling seems to exist in Hamlet's mind in relation to the King, and to the Queen? Quote lines in justification of your view.
3. State by whom, to whom, and on what occasions the following lines were uttered : —
 (a) What art thou that *usurp'st* this time of night?

- (b) Was sick almost *to doomsday* with eclipse.
- (c) An understanding *simple* and unschooled.
- (d) Would I had met my *dearest* foe in heaven.
- (e) More honored in the *breach* than the observance.

4. Quote the lines which precede or which follow the above.

5. Explain fully and annotate the words in italics.

6. Explain fully the following words and phrases: (a) *The sensible and true avouch*; (b) *romage*; (c) *extravagant*; (d) *lose your voice*; (e) *defeated*; (f) *slow leave*; (g) *discourse of reason*; (h) *primy nature*; (i) *addition*; (j) *bound to hear*; (k) *unhouseled*; (l) *without more circumstance*.

7. Give some examples of the peculiarities of Shakespeare's grammar.

B (SECOND ACT)

1. What new personages are introduced in the Second Act; and what are their respective functions in the play?

2. Describe shortly Hamlet's interview with the PLAYERS.

3. State in your own words the sum of Hamlet's reflections at the end of this act.

4. State by whom, of whom, and on what occasions the following lines were said:—

- (a) With *Windlaces*, and with *assays of bias*.
- (b) Ungartered and *down-gyrvèd* to his ankle.
- (c) To show us so much *gentry* and good will.
- (d) If I had played the desk or *table-book*.
- (e) How *express* and admirable!
- (f) I know a hawk from a *handsaw*.

5. Annotate the words in italics.

6. Explain fully the following words and phrases : (a) *Keep*; (b) *fetch of warrant*; (c) *shatter all his bulk*; (d) *borne in hand*; (e) *round with him*; (f) *lungs tickle o' the sere*; (g) *eyases*; (h) *region*; (i) *the general ear*; (j) *organ*.

7. Quote the lines in which the above words and phrases occur.

8. Give some examples of Shakespeare's use of the *dative*.

C (THIRD ACT)

1. Describe the character of Ophelia, and contrast her with the Queen.

2. Give the substance of the King's soliloquy in Scene Third.

3. Quote lines from this and from the First Act to show the opinion which Hamlet held of his father and of his uncle.

4. State by whom, of whom, and on what occasions the following lines were said :—

(a) Who would *fardels* bear,
To *grunt* and sweat under a weary life ?

(b) And I do doubt the *hatch* and the *disclose*.

(c) O'erstep not the *modesty* of nature.

(d) *Confederate* season, else no creature seeing.

(e) Up, sword ! and know thou a more horrid *hent* !

(f) *Conceit* in weakest bodies strongest works.

5. Annotate fully the words in italics.

6. Give some instances (a) of Shakespeare's use of a verb as a noun ; and (b) of his employment of prolepsis.

7. Explain fully the following words and phrases : (a) *Affront*; (b) *the rub*; (c) *in the ear*; (d) *by and by*; (e) *the cease of majesty*; (f) *broad-blown*; (g) *mopè*; (h) *capable of*; (i) *conclusions*.

D (FOURTH ACT)

1. Give a short, but connected, account of the incidents in this Act.

2. Give the substance of Hamlet's soliloquy in the Fourth Scene.

3. State the substance of the conversation of the King with Laertes in the Seventh Scene.

4. State by whom, of whom or what, and on what occasions the following lines were said :—

(a) As level as the cannon to *his blank*.

(b) Your fat king is but *variable service*.

(c) Thinking too *precisely* on the event.

(d) The ocean, *overpeering* of his list.

(e) They have dealt with me like *thieves of mercy*.

(f) For goodness, growing to a *plurisy*.

5. Explain fully the words in italics.

6. Explain the following words and phrases : (a) *The main*; (b) *makes mouths*; (c) *of large discourse*; (d) *not continent enough*; (e) *a riotous head*; (f) *a document in madness*; (g) *much unsinewed*; (h) *uncharge*; (i) *passages of proof*; (j) *mortal*.

7. Quote examples (a) of Shakespeare's use of the Northern plural; and (b) of such phrases as *his means of death*.

E (FIFTH ACT)

1. What are the events outside and also within the play that are gradually maturing the catastrophe; and what change seems to come over Hamlet's own mind?

2. Quote passages from Polonius's and from Osric's speeches to illustrate the euphuism of the time.

3. Quote the passage which shows that Hamlet had a presentiment of what was coming.

4. State by whom, of whom or what, and on what occasions the following lines were uttered:—

(a) Tell me that, and *unyoke*.

(b) The length and breadth of a pair of *indentures*.

(c) This grave shall have a *living monument*.

(d) With, ho! such *bugs* and goblins *in my life*.

(e) And in the cup an *union* shall he throw.

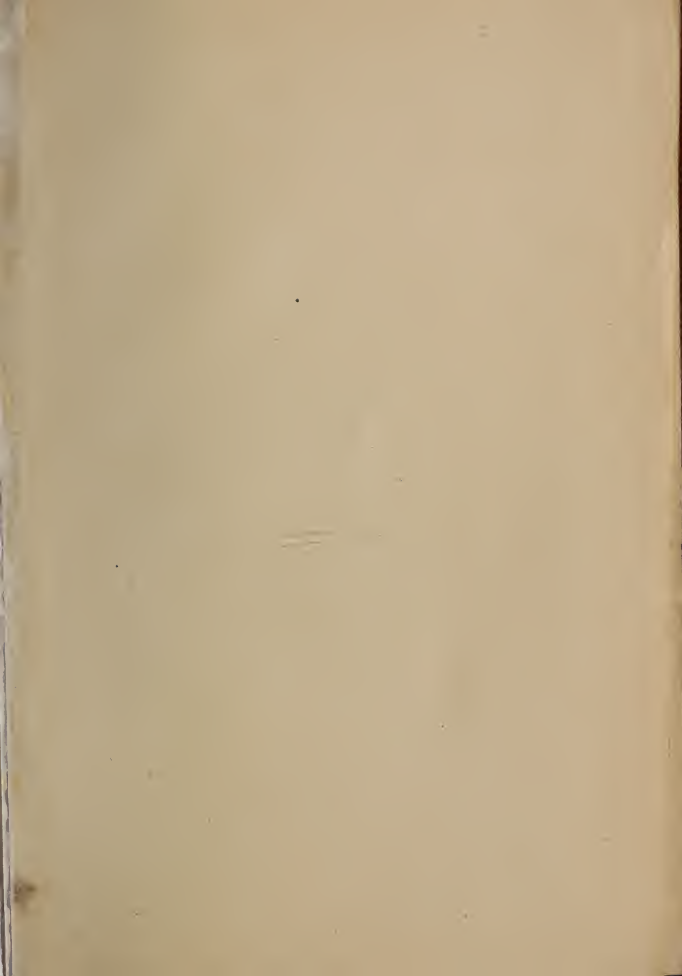
(f) *Absent thee* from felicity awhile.

5. Explain fully the words in italics.

6. Annotate the following words and phrases: (a) *On the supervise*; (b) *jowls it*; (c) *his quilllets*; (d) *warrantise*; (e) *conjures the stars*; (f) *too curiously*; (g) *benetted*; (h) *near my conscience*; (i) *spacious*; (j) *comply with*; (k) *outward habit*; (l) *quarry*; (m) *even Christian*.

7. Give some examples (a) of Shakespeare's use of an abstract for a concrete term; (b) of his use of *a* in the sense of *one*; and (c) of his 'ethical' use of *you*.

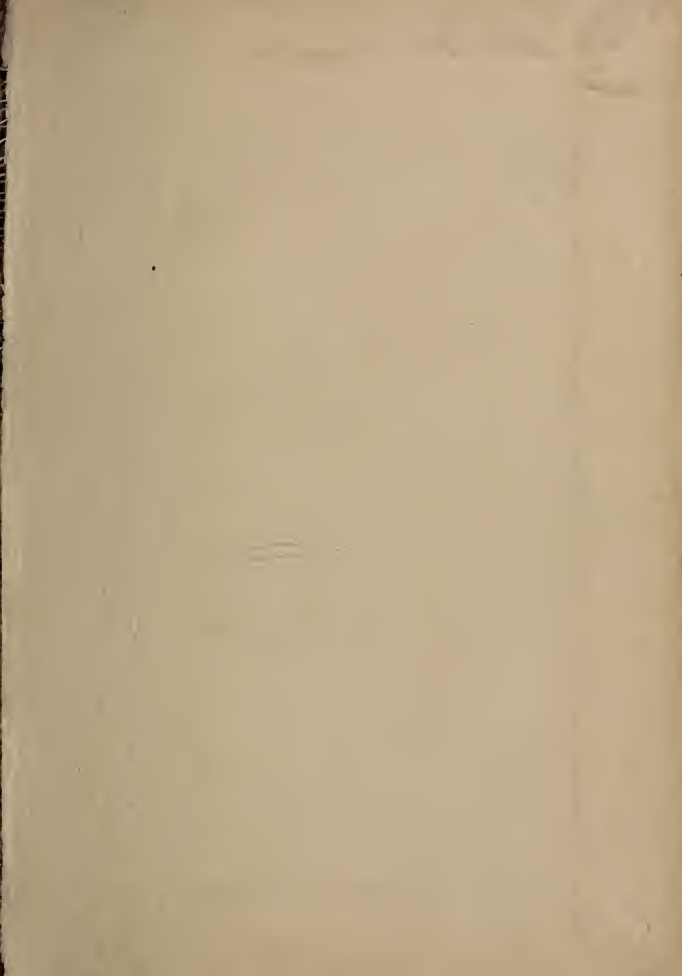
8. Write a short account of the character of *Hamlet*; and quote lines to bear out your opinions.











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